

I hope you remember, dear reader, how many thousands of times they lied to us about the fact that "the divisions of the Red Army were kept in peacetime states and by June 22 were half the size of the German ones"? Do you remember how our great "Marshal of Victory" reflected in his memoirs that *"on the eve of the war in the border districts, 19 divisions were equipped with 5-6 thousand people each, and 144 divisions had a strength of 8-9 thousand people"*?

In fact, according to the official collective monograph of the General Staff "1941 - lessons and conclusions", in the rifle divisions of the border districts the number of personnel was increased: "21 divisions - up to 14 thousand people, 72 divisions - up to 12 thousand **people and 6 rifle divisions divisions - up to 11 thousand people**" [3, p. 82].

Let us return, however, to Vladimirov's book: "... The order of mobilization provided for by the mobilization plans of the units basically boiled down to the following. Each part was divided into two mobilization echelons. The first mobilization echelon included 80-85 percent of the personnel of the unit ... The deadline for the readiness of the first echelon to set out on a campaign to complete a combat mission was set **at 6 hours**.

The second mobilization echelon of the unit included 15-20 percent of the personnel, as well as the entire reserve staff that arrived on mobilization. The deadline for readiness for the second echelon of units ... was set: for formations stationed in the border zone, as well as for the air defense and air force forces - **no later than the first day of mobilization**, and for all other formations - **in a day** ... All formations and

units were installed sheltered from air observation of the areas of mobilization outside their points of deployment, as well as the procedure for the exit of units into these areas and covering them during mobilization was determined. According to

the conclusion of the commissions of the headquarters of the army and the district, which checked the state of mobilization readiness of rifle formations and units in May-June 1941, **all rifle divisions and corps units were recognized as ready for mobilization on time ...** " [92]. So,

the traditional version was as follows: the Red Army needed at least another whole year in order to prepare for

war. The Germans did not wait like knights and attacked the "unprepared for war" army.

In a slightly more refined version, this nonsense sounded like this: it took another two or three weeks to complete the mobilization measures, but the Wehrmacht's rapid advance into the interior of the country made mobilization impossible. Which is what caused...

But in fact, **the covert mobilization was almost COMPLETE.** The rifle divisions of the western military districts (that is, the main backbone of the army of that era and, we note, the main force in defense!) Almost completed their mobilization, and the planned terms of their readiness for combat operations were calculated not even in days, but in HOURS. A small "appendage" (the second mobilization echelon) could be brought to full readiness in just one or two days. How could a "surprise attack" by the Germans deprive the Red Army of these few hours? Was the USSR similar in size to Luxembourg or Denmark, which the Wehrmacht occupied in one day? It is also important to note that on the eve of the war, our command had no doubts about the reality of the indicated terms for resupplying and bringing units to full combat readiness. The main types of small arms and artillery weapons were already in the units (see above). The shortage of 50%

of the regular number of vehicles, noted by Vladimirsky, did not at all portend a catastrophe. The fact is that the "staff numbers" themselves, provided for by Stalin's plans for preparing for the Great War, were huge. So, in a howitzer

regiment (36 howitzers) of a rifle division of the Red Army, according to the staffing table in April 1941, it was planned to have 73 tractors (that is, **two tractors for one howitzer**), 90 trucks and 3 cars. Moreover, two tractors for one gun is a double reservation of mechanized traction, and not at all evidence of the exorbitant weight of artillery systems. A 122 mm howitzer carried about 2.5 tons, a 152 mm howitzer - 4.2 tons. For towing divisional howitzers, tractors manufactured by the Stalingrad and Chelyabinsk inputs (STZ-3, STZ-5, S-60, S-65) were intended. This is exactly the vehicle

that, in any rain and snow, could move along Russian dirt roads.

Tractors ensured the speed of towing guns over rough terrain at 10-15 km / h - quite sufficient for a rifle (i.e. infantry) division, where artillery was only required to keep up with walking soldiers. In any case, the enemy did not even dream of 72 tracked tractors in an artillery regiment. In the only artillery regiment of the Wehrmacht infantry division, all artillery systems (including 150-mm howitzers) were pulled by six horses. In reality, by the beginning of the war, the

troops of the Kyiv District were armed with 2389 howitzers (1277 caliber 122-mm and 1112 caliber 152-mm) [29, p. 97]. In parentheses, we note that for the full staffing of all divisions of the district (2 rifle, 16 tank, 8 motorized) according to the staffing standards, 2016 howitzers were required. And there were 2239 serviceable tractors in the artillery of the district (not counting the tractors that were in service with mechanized units!) [152, p. 83]. As you can easily see, **the number of mechanized traction facilities is almost equal to the number of towing objects**. In addition, the district artillery also had 161 specialized tractors (Comintern, Voroshilovets, Kommunar), designed to tow heavy guns. In a separate anti-tank division of a rifle division of the Red Army, according to the

staffing table, there were 24 vehicles and 21 tractors for 8 45-mm guns (in the anti-tank division of a motorized division - 27 tractors for 18 guns). Moreover, the armored caterpillar "Komsomolets" was used as a tractor - created on the basis of components and assemblies of the T-38 light tank. armed with a machine gun in a ball mount and generally corresponding in terms of combat capabilities to the German tankette Pz-I, which all Soviet historians invariably included in the category of "tanks". By July 1941, 7,780 were produced and 6,700 of these Komsomol members were transferred to the troops [148]. The troops of the Kyiv OVO included 1088 serviceable Komsomol members, i.e. an average of 27 tractors for each anti-tank division. In a word, rumors about a "catastrophic shortage of mechanized traction" in the artillery of the Red Army are greatly exaggerated. Things were much worse with the mobilization efficiency of the mechanized corps. It is understandable. Firstly, the

mechanized corps, by definition, requires a huge number of "mechanisms", in

including cars and tractors (caterpillar tractors), a significant part of which, according to the plan, was supposed to work in the national economy until the day the open mobilization was announced. Secondly, Stalin's gigantomania, as a result of which 29 mechanized corps, each with a thousand tanks, were formed almost simultaneously, exceeded the real possibilities of the country's

economy. Having admitted all this, we will not rush to conclusions again, but rather let's start studying specific facts, taken from the same monograph by Vladimirsky:

"The 22nd, 9th and 19th mechanized corps were formed from April 1941 on the basis of former tank brigades and by the beginning of the war were still in the stage of organization ... Having a relatively larger number of personnel (tank division - 9 thousand people, or 80 percent, motorized division - 10.2 thousand people, or 90 percent of wartime states), mechanized formations had a shortage of commanding officers and non-commissioned officers (40-50 percent) ... The situation was especially unfavorable with the staffing of units by commanders of tanks and tank units, as well as driver-mechanics and other specialists ..." True, one should not forget about **what corpus** writes Vladimirsky.

According to the

pre-war plans of the command of the Soviet armored forces, the 19th MK was not even among the nineteen "combat mechanized corps" and was formed according to reduced staffing, and the 22nd and 9th MKs were to complete the formation only in 1942. Lack of a regular number of tank commanders and driver mechanics were completely "balanced" by the lack of a regular number of tanks. So, in the 22nd MK there were 712 tanks (69%), in the 9th MK - 316 tanks (31%), in the 19th MK - 453 tanks (44%). Everything is relative. The Wehrmacht, whose numbers began to

feverishly increase from the autumn of 1940, experienced the same problems: *"... in tank and motorized divisions, regular officers made up*

50% of the command staff, in infantry divisions - from 35 to 10% ... The rest were reservists, whose professional training was much lower..." [189, p. 72]. Only in the writings of Soviet propagandists did the notorious "two-year experience

waging modern warfare. Of the five tank divisions of the 1st tank group of the Wehrmacht

- not **a single one participated in the Polish campaign**, - **only two** participated in the invasion of France (9th and

11th tank divisions), - the 14th tank division managed to fight before the

"Barbarossa" one week in Yugoslavia - the 13th and 16th TDs (created in October 1940 on the basis of infantry divisions) until June 22, 1941 did not **take any**

part in the hostilities at all. The situation in drums 4th, 8th and 15th MK was much better. In particular, the divisions of the 15th MK before the war were staffed with 94-100% rank and file, junior commanders - 45-75%, senior commanders - 50-87%, and the shortage of command personnel was mainly due to a lack of political workers and administrative - economic personnel. The 8th MK, even before the call-up of assigned staff under the guise of "big training camps" in June 1941, was staffed by 89%, its artillery regiments were armed with 88% of the regular number of guns, there were even more anti-tank 45-mm guns "norms" (49 instead of 36). In these three mechanized corps, even before the announcement of open mobilization, there were 2-3 thousand vehicles each, from 165 (15th MK) to 359 (8th MK) tractors and tractors. And although it was still far from full-time staffing (5165 vehicles, which means 1 vehicle per 6 personnel of the mechanized corps, including tankers), one can hardly agree with those authors who state that "the so-called mechanized corps were ordinary infantry with a *tank amplification...*" On the whole, the following situation developed throughout the Red Army. In February 1941, the

troops already had **34,000 tractors** (caterpillar tractors), **201,000 trucks and special vehicles, and 12,600 cars** [16, p. 622]. Of course, in February 1941, the equipment of the Red Army with military equipment was by no means completed. The factories worked in three shifts, and the military order for 1941 was 13,150 trucks and tractors [16, p. 617]. The number of vehicles in the Red Army by June 1941 had grown to 273,000 [2, p. 363]. Finally, on June 23, open mobilization was announced, and despite all the chaos

and the confusion of the catastrophic start of the war, by July 1, 1941, another **31.5 thousand tractors and 234 thousand cars** were transferred from the national economy to the Red Army [3, p. 115]. On average, each of the 303 Soviet divisions (of all types, in all districts) theoretically accounted for 220 tractors and 1,670 vehicles;; Zh. For one division. Average. This means that in the divisions of the western border districts of equipment there should have been twice as much equipment - mobilized cars and tractors were not sent to the Siberian district ... This is where

we should rejoice at the enormous achievements of Stalin's industrialization, but really rejoice nothing. We open the reports of the commanders of the Soviet corps and divisions and in almost every one we read: *"The material part provided for by the mobplan did not arrive on mobilization."* Like this? And where, then, did these same *"234 thousand cars and over 31.5 thousand tractors"* arrive ??? Rokossovsky

(in those days - the commander of the 9th MK) writes that the personnel of motorized rifle regiments and divisions of the corps, who found themselves at the beginning of the war without horses and without cars, had to literally carry mortars on their shoulders, hand and easel machine guns, ammunition, as a result of which "he was completely exhausted and lost all combat effectiveness." How did it happen that the divisions of the mechanized corps did not get either 1700 or even 170 vehicles from among those mobilized in the

first week of the war? And here is the report

of the commander of the 10th TD (15th MK): *"... assigned vehicles from the national economy, according to the mobilization plan, should have arrived by the end of M-2 (i.e., the second day of mobilization): "GAZ-AA" - 188 and "ZIS-5" - 194. The division did not receive a single machine from this*

*number either in M-2, or on any of the following days ... "**"A report was received from the commander of the 2nd PTAB, Colonel M. I. Nedelin, that he had not yet received a tractor from the national economy and only one division will be*

able to move to the border" - these are lines from the memoirs of Marshal Baghramyan [110]. No, it is no coincidence that Nedelin was later to become the commander of the Strategic Missile Forces of the USSR: he was still able, even in this environment of general chaos, to withdraw an

I PTAB, as Vladimirsky writes, even by June 29 (on the seventh day of the war!) *"because of the lack of tractors, I remained in Novograd Volynsky"* (250 km east of the border). Exactly the same situation has developed with all the other PTABs, on all fronts. Not a single brigade - except for the 1st PTAB Moskalenko - did not fulfill its task in the fight against enemy tanks, and all Soviet historians unanimously name the same reason in all their books - the lack of mechanized traction. Like this? Where did all the equipment go - both the one that was already in units on June 22, and the one that was mobilized in the first days? .

All this, some reader will say, are separate private shortcomings. If you please, here is a generalized

picture for you: *"... the delivery of the mobilization of mechanized transport was extremely poor ... Thousands of cars and tractors that needed repair were accumulated at the delivery points. There were cases when cars arrived at the delivery points of military registration and enlistment offices without fuel or, due to the lack of it, did not arrive at the farms at all ... So, from the Moscow Military District (that is, from the central, capital district. - M.S.) managed to send cars under their own power, on the third day of mobilization only a quarter of the cars were sent ... often, due to great haste, road transport was loaded into trains and sent to the front without drivers and fuel ... 1320 trains (50,347 wagons) with idle cars / sh on the railways ... "* [3] General Vladimirsky also names some reasons

for the strange course of mobilization: *"... On the evening of June 26, the Military*

*Council of the 5th Army heard a report on the progress of mobilization of the troops and rear services of the 5th Army. It was found that the mobilization of the troops and rear of the army, which, according to the mob plan, should have been completed at 24:00 on June 25, that is, on the third day of mobilization, announced from 00:00 on June 23, was actually disrupted ... (i.e. occupied in September 1939 during the "liberation campaign" in Poland. - M.S.) regions of Ukraine - either did not have time to appear in the unit, or **evaded the appearance** for mobilization ... The few vehicles of local enterprises in troops did not arrive, as **it was used to evacuate families of Soviet employees and workers to the east ... "***

What a delight... Families of WORKERS comfortably, in cars, loaded with their household items (and fics to boot), go to the rear. Perhaps those who were born and raised somewhere in New Zealand can believe

this... Vladimirsky explains such an unexpected and discouraging disruption in the mobilization of reservists by "the psychological impact of the enemy's *surprise attack on the mood of the local population, the rapid shift of the front line to the east and subversive activities of enemy agents on our territory.*

But that's not all: "*The command and technical staff of the reserve, mechanized transport and driver's staff, assigned from the **eastern** (i.e., under the rule of the Bolsheviks since 1919 - M.S.) regions, also did not arrive in the army .. .*" General Vladimirsky did not comment on this information in any way ...

At the end of the chapter, we reiterate the main point. The Red Army was by no means unarmed. In the course of covert pre-war mobilization, it has already received a huge number of people, guns, tanks and tractors, much more than the enemy. The disruption of plans for open mobilization weakened its combat capabilities, but by no

means reduced them to zero. And yet the first toll of the funeral bell has already sounded. The vaunted Stalinist "order" in the very first hours of meeting with a real, armed enemy turned into unprecedented chaos and anarchy. The theoretically solid army mechanism began to crumble into separate "gears" before the first shots were fired.

MILITARY COUNCIL

Now, having finished with all the necessary explanations, digressions, references, let's move on to the simplest - to a description of the course of hostilities.

As noted above, Directive No. 3 differed markedly from the pre-war plans of the Southwestern Front. On the one hand, the volume of assigned tasks was reduced - of the two operational directions (to Lublin and Krakow), only one remained. On the other hand, interaction with the left flank of the Western Front (namely, this idea of bilateral coverage of the Lublin grouping of Germans by the adjacent flanks of the Southwestern and Western Fronts was invariably present in all pre-war plans) could no longer be counted on. The 4th Army of the Western Front in the Brest-Kobrin region was literally swept away by the most powerful 2nd Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht, began a disorderly retreat, and it could not have been involved in any offensive operations together with the 5th Army of the Southwestern Front be out of the question. Consequently, the second, northern, tip of the "tank pincers", which were supposed to close in the Lublin region behind the back of the enemy group advancing on Lutsk-Brody, had to be created on the move, from the very limited forces that the 5th Army had. But by the night of June 22-23 (when, as follows from the memoirs of Marshal Baghramyan, Directive No. 3 was received and deciphered), the situation on the front of the 5th Army worsened significantly.

The German command, resolutely and boldly concentrating forces in the direction of the main attack, concentrated seven infantry divisions on the 70-kilometer section of the border from Vladimir-Volynsky to Krystynopol (now Chervonograd). All bridges across the border Bug, guarded by the NKVD troops, were captured by the Germans safe and sound. The report of the headquarters of the 1st TGr of the Wehrmacht noted:

"... the most important bridge at Sokal was captured intact. Crossing over the river Bug passed quietly. The infantry climbed to the heights east of the Bug without encountering any resistance..." [40, p. 227].

By the evening of June 22, the German infantry, having crossed the Bug, pushed back from the border and partially surrounded two rifle divisions of the 5th Army. Two tank divisions crossed over to the captured bridgehead and went on the offensive: the 14th tank division to Lutsk, the 11th tank division to Radekhov (see Map No. 4). The heroic struggle of several garrisons of the Vladimir-Volynsky and Strumilovsky fortified areas (according to the stories of local residents, some pillboxes fired until the end of June) could not, unfortunately, change the overall operational situation.

The only strike formation that the command of the 5th Army had in this area was the 41st Panzer Division from the 22nd MK. In terms of the number of tanks, the 41st Panzer Division outnumbered both German tank divisions combined. But the commander of the 41st TD, having opened the "red package" on the morning of June 22, found there an order to march from Vladimir-Volynsky to the north, to the Lyuboml-Kovel region. The order was carried out, as a result of which the 41st TD literally "opened its doors" to the 14th Wehrmacht Panzer Division advancing on Vladimir-Volynsky. In parentheses, we note that the "red package" definitely brought the 41st Panzer Division to the starting area for an attack on Lublin, which can serve as another confirmation that such an offensive was being prepared long before the start of the war.

It would seem that in the current situation, the command of the 5th Army had two options for using the 41st TD: it could be thrown on the offensive against Lublin (in accordance with Directive No. 3) and it could be returned back and used for a counterattack on the flank of the advancing highway to Lutsk of the main enemy grouping. But neither was implemented. Oddly enough, our reconnaissance aviation interfered, about the "destruction" of which Soviet historians (and, paradoxically, V. Suvorov) lamented in the very first hours of the war. Aviation, however, was not "destroyed". She flew, there were a lot of her (the

315th and 316th reconnaissance regiments, 62 serviceable aircraft, including 38 of the latest Yak-4 high-speed reconnaissance aircraft), and she reported to the headquarters of the 5th army and the front that from Brest to Kovel, through the forests and swamps of Polissya, countless enemy hordes are moving. As Bagramyan writes [110], the composition of this grouping that did not exist in nature was then estimated at **two thousand tanks** (and this despite the fact that not a single

the Wehrmacht tank group did not actually have even one thousand tanks). Unfortunately, the reconnaissance of the 5th Army for four days (!!!) was unable to clarify the situation, i.e. get on a motorcycle and drive 140 km along the motorway from Kovel to the suburbs of Brest in two hours (Brest itself, captured by the Germans on the very first day of the war, should not have been called in). Only on the morning of June 27 in the intelligence report of the Yu-3 headquarters. f. No. 7, finally, the recognition appeared that *"information about the action of large mechanized units from the direction of Brest to Kovel was not confirmed"* [29, p. 37]. All this led to the fact that not only the 41st TD, but also another division of the 22nd MK (215th motorized) went along the route Rivne - Lutsk - Kovel into the forests and swamps of Polesie, towards the mythical enemy tanks.

And so it happened that on the way of the advancing along the highway to Lutsk, the 14th TD of the Wehrmacht was only the 1st anti-tank artillery brigade under the command of K.S. Moskalenko. She saved the day. Despite the fact that the 1st PTAB entered the battle in the most disadvantageous position - on the move on the move, in random firing positions, without disguising the guns - the courage of the soldiers and commanders, excellent training and preparation of artillery crews, the military talent of the brigade commander turned out to be stronger than the enemy tanks. The German commanders' lack of experience in tank combat also had an effect - the 14th TD was formed in October 1940 on the basis of the 4th **Infantry** Division, and its "track record" included only the inglorious invasion of Yugoslavia in April 41st.

Paying tribute to the heroism of the soldiers, we note, for the sake of truth, the quality of Soviet weapons. The most powerful guns (76-mm and 85-mm guns), which the brigade was equipped with, pierced the armor of any German

tanks. The operational report of the 5th Army No. 9 contained a message that *"in the period from June 23 to June 27, the 1st PTAB destroyed and knocked out about 150 enemy tanks"* [75, p. 40]. This figure, of course, is exaggerated many times over - by the beginning of August 1941, the irretrievable losses of the 14th TD of the Wehrmacht amounted to only 27 tanks (6 Pz-IV, 17 Pz-III, 4 Pz-II), and another 18 tanks were listed temporarily faulty [10, p. 206]. But the fact that instead of a victorious march along the motorway to Lutsk, German tanks had to break through the defense line of the 1st PTAB for three days with heavy losses is beyond doubt.

Unfortunately, there was no other such brigade in the Radekhovsky direction (although there were four PTABs in the Yu-3. F.), "and most importantly, there was no other such Moskalenko. By the end of the day on June 22, the German 11th Panzer Division with advanced units to the Radekhiv region (35 km from the border).

To the south, in the strip from Rava-Ruska to Przemyśl (now this city is again in Poland, and on the map it is designated as Przemyśl), the German infantry tried with varying success to push back units of the 6th and 26th armies from the border. *"In the rest of the sectors of the 26th Army, the situation did not cause alarm,"* Bagra myan writes in his memoirs, *"and it was quite calm in the band of the 12th Army, which took up defense in the Carpathians and Bukovina."*

Such was the general situation on the Southwestern Front during those hours when, on the night of June 22-23, at the Yu-3 command post. f. Colonel General Mikhail Petrovich Kirponos (front commander), Lieutenant General Maxim Alekseevich Purkaev (front chief of staff), Corps Commissar Nikolai Nikolayevich Vashugin (his position was called "member of the Front Military Council", but we will continue to call it is simple and understandable - commissar), as well as General of the Army, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Ukraine, the future head of the nuclear superpower Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, who arrived as authorized representatives of the Headquarters. This team had to make a historic decision. The huge forces

assembled on the Southwestern Front, the exceptionally favorable outline of the border (in which the Lvov group of Soviet troops hung over the enemy's deep rear), the flanks of the front securely covered by the swamps of Polesie and the Carpathian Mountains - all this made it possible to set the task of encircling and completely defeating the enemy Group armies of the South. And such a turn of events would have ruined the entire Blitzkrieg plan for the Germans, inevitably forced them to withdraw troops from the main operational direction Minsk-Smolensk-Moscow. In a word, history would change its course...

From the memoirs of Bagramyan, who was present at this meeting (at that time - the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the front), it is known that Purkaev and Vashugin expressed directly opposite opinions.

The chief of staff believed that it was necessary to withdraw the troops to the east, to the line of fortified areas beyond the old Soviet-Polish border, and only after that, having stabilized the defense front, go on the offensive.

The Commissar of the Front demanded to proceed immediately implementation of the Directive of the Headquarters on the transition to the counteroffensive.

The author, sitting in an easy chair in front of a computer, does not consider himself entitled to argue about which of them was right. Moreover, both of them were right, and right **in their own way** .

The chief of staff, like no one else, understood that, according to pre-war plans, the front needed another three to four days to fully mobilize troops (i.e., call up assigned staff, mobilize vehicles from the national economy, deploy rear services). The enemy, on the other hand, will not wait, and his offensive may thwart organized mobilization—that is why it is better to withdraw yourself to a powerful defensive line prepared in advance and prepare behind it for a decisive counterattack. The commissar knew better than anyone how many thousands of times the

Red Army men were told that the Red Army would be “the most attacking of all armies”, that it would smash the enemy “in a foreign land”, etc. Withdrawal from the first days of the war, and even retreat to a depth of 200-250 km, could have the most negative impact on the morale of the troops - and this is no less dangerous than the lack of tractors and trucks. In addition, Purkaev's proposal had a very bad political connotation - a hasty withdrawal from the territories "liberated" in September 1939 would look like an indirect recognition of the illegality of their seizure. The commissioner could not allow such a thing. And in his own way he was, of course, right.

The army is based on unity of command. That is why there is a commander at the front, in order, having gathered together everything reasonable in the proposals of his subordinates, to take the only decision that is binding on everyone. And in the situation that developed on the Southwestern Front, it was not so difficult to combine

the opposite. *“Happiness is on the side of the big battalions,”* Napoleon used to say. *“The God of War does not like talented adventurers, he loves large armies,”* wrote the American military historian Taylor a century and a half later.

And in this sense, Zhukov and Kirponos were incredibly lucky. At the disposal of the Yu-3 command. f. there were enough forces both to **go over to a stubborn defense** in the zone of the 5th Army, and to deliver **a crushing blow** by the forces of the "three heroes" (15th, 4th and 8th mechanized corps) in the direction of Lvov - Lublin, to the flank and rear of the entire enemy group advancing on the Lutsk-Radekhov front.

There was a map on the table in front of the generals. With the very outline of the "border of mutual state interests on the territory of the former Polish state", which on September 28, 1939, when signing the Treaty of Friendship and the Border with Nazi Germany, Stalin signed already in two places. And now, on the night of June 23, 1941, Zhukov had every reason to raise a faceted glass of tea for the wisdom and brilliant insight of Comrade Stalin. Before firing a single shot, the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front were actually deploying behind German lines, and their forward units were already stationed 50-80 km west of the city of Zamosc, where the headquarters of the German Army Group South was located.

The strike group of three mechanized corps (15th, 4th, 8th MK) consisted of **more than two and a half thousand tanks, including 720 T-34 and KB tanks**, invulnerable to 37-mm anti-tank guns of German infantry divisions. By attacking the flank and rear of the main forces of Army Group South, deployed before the war in the Zamostye-Lublin region, the Soviet command from the very first days of the war could impose its will on the enemy, worked out plans, regroup troops, force hastily change it lose time and initiative.

Least. As much as possible, it was possible to encircle and defeat the German 6th Army, without waiting for this army to reach Stalingrad in the summer of 1942. The troops of the Kiev OVO were preparing for the attack on Lublin for at least half a year. Routes, lines, possible enemy countermeasures - all this was studied and worked out by the command staff. Finally, such an offensive would also make absolutely pointless the breakthrough of the German tank divisions, which thus drove themselves into a deep and hopeless trap near Dubno-Rovno. On the other hand, regardless of the success (or

failure) of the tank attack on Lublin, at the Yu-3 command. f. had every opportunity to

in order to stop the German advance on Lutsk-Rivne. In fact, in a matter of days, the density of the defense of the 5th Army could be increased many times over. Two rifle corps (31st and 36th) on June 18, 1941, according to the order approved by Zhukov himself, began to advance to the west. By the end of the day on June 23, these corps (six rifle divisions) were at a distance of 90-100 km, i.e. four diurnal transitions, from the Kovel-Lutsk-Dubno line [92]. Tens of thousands of vehicles, which were to be received by the troops of the front from the national economy, made it possible to transfer these divisions to the front not in four days, but in four hours. Two divisions - the 135th rifle and the 19th tank divisions from the 22nd MK - approached the eastern suburbs of Lutsk by the Ugru on June 23. By June 24, two mechanized corps of the front reserve, the 9th and 19th, which had begun the march on the morning of June 22, were leaving the line of the Styr River. Finally, having dealt with the mythical enemy grouping allegedly advancing from Brest to Kovel, it was possible to return to active hostilities the two divisions of the 22nd MK, which had settled in the Kovel forests:

the 41st tank and 215th motorized divisions. Thus, seven infantry (298, 44, 168, 299, 111, 75, 57th), two motorized (25th and 16th) and four tank (14th, 13th, 11th, 16th) divisions of the Wehrmacht , advancing in the Lutsk-Radekhov zone, the Southwestern Front could oppose seven rifle, three motorized and six tank divisions - and this is not counting those two rifle divisions (87th and 124th), which even before the start of the war occupied the defense

zone from Ustiluga to Sokal. In terms of the total number of tanks, the grouping of Soviet troops in the Rovno direction was **2.5 times** superior to the enemy. Even taking into account the fact that the 9th and 19th mechanized corps were not mobilized and equipped with a regular number of vehicles, the balance of forces of the parties, according to all the canons of military science, made it possible at least to prevent a stampede and begin a systematic mobile defense of the 5th Army troops.

Contrary to a widespread misconception, the Red Army's combat manuals by no means ruled out defense, including mobile defense. In the Field Manual PU-39, this issue was described in great detail:

"P. 417. Mobile defense is used in those cases when the overwhelming superiority of the enemy precludes the conduct of a stubborn defense on a normal, as well as on a wide front. Mobile defense pursues the goal of gaining the time necessary to organize defense on a new line, to ensure the concentration of troops in a given direction, or to ensure freedom of action for troops in other directions, by losing space.

Mobile defense is carried out in a designated zone and is carried out in a series of successive defensive battles at predetermined lines. The number of defensive

lines in a given zone and the duration of resistance on each of them depend on the time required to delay the enemy, and are established by the senior commander ... p. 419. The troops defending an intermediate line must inflict losses on the advancing enemy, force him to turn around, lose time to organize an offensive and, without engaging in a stubborn battle with him, slip away from the blow ... "

Nature itself took care of the creation of defensive lines in the zone of the 5th Army. From south to north, almost at regular intervals of 50-70 km, the area is crossed by the tributaries of the Pripyat: Turya, Stokhod, Styr, Goryn, Chanc. General Vladimirovsky in his monograph defines these rivers as *"water barriers of operational tactical significance. They had a channel width - from 15 to 70 m, valleys - from 0.5 to 2 km, the banks of the rivers were swampy in places, the bottom was muddy.* In short, the terrain is quite anti-tank. Especially if you put four (!!!) anti-tank brigades at the bridges and crossings, which the South-Western Front had at its disposal. At the same time, we emphasize again and again that in the current situation, the troops of the 5th Army were not required to "stand to the death." It was necessary and sufficient only **to slow down the German offensive**, to tie up his tank divisions in battle. In itself, the organized and planned withdrawal of Soviet troops for 200-250 km from the border to the border of the Goryn or Sluch rivers did not conceal anything terrible. For France, a retreat of 200 km meant the fall of Paris; for Germany, a retreat of 150 km from the French border meant the loss of the entire Ruhr industrial region. And the Soviet Union had a completely different geography. Neither economically nor operationally

the temporary loss of the Volyn and Rivne regions of Western Ukraine could not have any serious impact on the course of the war.

Alas, at the Military Council in Ternopil, Zhukov and Kirpo-nos **did not dare either to switch to mobile defense in the 5th Army zone, or to launch a large-scale offensive** by the forces of three mechanized corps in the Lublin direction.

Commander of the 5th Army, Major General M.I. Potapov was ordered to advance with the task of "destroying the enemy's Vladimir-Volyn grouping and restoring the situation on the border." Advance immediately, without waiting for the approach of front-line reserves (two rifle and two mechanized corps). And since Zhukov, even on June 24-25, continued to believe in the existence of large motorized enemy troops in the Brest-Kovel direction, he *"in a firm and confident tone"* (as Vladimirsky writes in his book) ordered Potapov to bend the right flank of the army and *"secure Kovel from an enemy strike from the Brest direction"*. In parentheses, we note that by this moment Guderian's tank group had already passed 160 km from Brest to Slonim, and the general direction of its movement (to Minsk - Bobruisk) did not raise any doubts. As a result, in order to carry out the order to attack Vladimir-Volynsky, the army commander Potapov was able to attract only those two divisions that had already approached Lutsk: the 135th rifle and 19th tank divisions. Commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General I.N. Mu-

zychenko was ordered to immediately attack the enemy tank group advancing on Radekhov-Berestechko with the forces of the 15th mechanized corps alone, without waiting for the concentration of two other mechanized corps (4th and 8th) in the Brody area. The decision to relocate the 4th and 8th MKs 100-150 km east of the border, to the area of the city of Brody, clearly indicated that from the offensive from the Lvov ledge to Lublin (which was provided for by Directive No. 3. f. silently refused. Instead of a deep offensive operation (the theoretical development of which is invariably cited as an example of the highest level of Soviet military science), it was decided to engage in feverish "patching holes" through hastily organized frontal tank attacks.

Perhaps the most delicate thing that can be said about such "operational art" is that the decision was "not the most optimal."

"The enemy, who started the war with an unexpected blow, dictated his will to us, broke our plans" [105].

So, having spent only a dozen words, the commissar of the 8th mechanized corps N.K. Popel said almost everything: both about the pre-war plans (according to which, in the very first hours of the war, his corps moved to the crossings across the border river), and that the German attack was not supposed in **these plans**, and about the front command, which allowed the enemy from the very first days of the war "dictate their will to us."

"Happiness is on the side of large battalions ..." If

the forces of the parties in the southern theater of operations were approximately equal, then the decision made on the night of June 23 to counterattack the enemy with scattered strikes from individual units and formations would lead to an immediate catastrophic defeat of the Southwestern Front. Similar to the one that actually happened in the first days of the war with the troops of the Western Front in Belarus and the North-Western Front - in Lithuania.

But it was not for nothing that the huge, richest country in the world starved for two decades, huddled in barracks and "communal apartments", it was not for nothing that in peacetime the military factories of the USSR worked in three shifts, it was not for nothing that in the country of workers and peasants a nursing mother was returned from a two-month-old baby to the machine, not in vain the best heads of the multinational Soviet people pored over the drawings of tanks and aircraft day and night. The result of great labors was. "Weighty, rough, visible." Zhukov, Kirponos, Muzychenko and others were given such gigantic armed forces, such a quantity of the latest weapons, which, it would seem, by their sheer scale could compensate for the illiteracy of the leadership. In fact, "only" the 15th MK, which was ordered, without

waiting for the approach of two other mechanized corps, to attack the Radekhov enemy grouping, had 749 tanks in its arsenal - five times more than in the **opposing** 11th Wehrmacht Panzer Division. And among these 749 tanks there were 136 with such

parameters that German tankers could only dream of. Even in the Lutsk direction, where a counter attack on the 14th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht, already pretty battered by Moskalenko's artillerymen, "only" two fresh Soviet divisions (19th Panzer and 135th Rifles) were supposed to deliver, the balance of forces, it would seem, did not portend trouble. It would seem that...

JUNE 23-25, 1941

The analysis of how the decisions adopted on June 23, 1941 at the Military Council in Ternopil were carried out, we will start with the main thing - from the most powerful on the Southwestern Front, the 4th mechanized **corps** of General Vlasov. This will not take much time and paper from May - the 4th MK took almost no part in the planned counterattack (about what is hidden behind the word "almost" - see below). The command of the Red

Army placed the highest hopes on this corps. In August - September 1940, a series of large-scale military exercises were held on the basis of the 4th mechanized corps on the topics: "introducing the mechanized corps into the breakthrough", "actions of the mechanized corps in the depths of the enemy's operational defense", "march and oncoming battle". The final exercise on September 26-28 was personally attended by the People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko and the then Chief of the General Staff Meretskov. The "rising star" of the Soviet general A.A. was appointed to the post of commander of the 4th MK. Vlasov. The 4th MK received 414 of the newest T-34 and KV tanks - exactly as many as were in all the other Yu-3 mechanized corps. f., combined. Already after the start of hostilities, two artillery regiments of the RGK (441st and 445th) were transferred to operational subordination to Vlasov. These regiments were armed with the latest artillery systems: 152-mm ML-20 howitzers on a mechanical (tractor)

thrust.

How was this steel armada used? Already on the night of June 22-23, 1941, Zhukov, who personally arrived at the Yu-3 command post. f., demanded from the commander of the 6th Army, Muzychenko, *"to transfer the 4th mechanized corps to **the right flank** of the army as soon as possible"*, i.e. in the area of the planned counterattack from Brody to Radekhov. But it was not there - easily and naturally, Lieutenant General Muzychenko ignored the direct instructions of the Army General, the representative of the Headquarters and the Chief of the General Staff. Muzychenko not only did not give up "his" 4th MK, but even tried (albeit unsuccessfully) to "pull out" the "foreign" 8th MK from the front command. In the end, the most powerful 4th mechanized corps did not take over the city of Lublin "by the end of June 24", nor catch up and smash the 1st tank group of the Wehrmacht. For several days the corps tossed about in the "enchanted

triangle "Nemirov - Mostyska - Lvov as a" fire brigade "with which Muzychenko tried to stop the advance of the German infantry to Lvov. In the report of Colonel E.G. Pushkin (he died in the rank of lieutenant general of tank troops on March 11, 44), commander of the 32nd TD of the 4th mechanized corps, the events of those days described like this:

"... 23.6.41. The division received an order, in cooperation with the 8th Panzer and 81st Motorized Rifle Divisions, to surround and destroy the enemy in the area ... Having not gone 30 km, it received a second task at 10 o'clock on the march - to destroy enemy tanks in the area of Cape Belke Bridges. The division column had to turn 180 degrees along one road. Upon arrival in the area of Cape Bridges Belke, the division of enemy tanks did not find it.

At 5 p.m., a new order was received from the commander of the 6th Army to destroy an air assault and 300 enemy tanks in the Kamenka Strumilov area. Parts of the division and the tank group Golyas began to fulfill the new order, but no enemy tanks were found there, and there were units in Kamenka Strumilov ... The tank regiments of the division made a march on average up to 100 km per day ...

24.6.41 By 1 o'clock in the morning the division concentrated in the area ... At 11 o'clock a new order was received by 15 o'clock on 24.6 to concentrate in the area ... with the task of destroying the enemy in cooperation with the 8th Panzer and 81st Motorized Rifle Divisions in the area of Olshin, Hotynets, Mlynny. The 32nd motorized rifle regiment, on the orders of the commander of the 4th mechanized corps, was sent to Lvov as an army reserve (thus, Muzychenko finally left the 32nd TD division without motorized infantry. - M.S). Division, marching through the streets of the mountains. Lvov, met with an oncoming stream of combat and transport vehicles of the 8th mechanized corps (the 8th MK moved east to catch up with German tanks, and the 32nd TD once again returned to the west, to the border. - M.S). On the streets of the mountains There were street battles with saboteurs in Lvov (a full-scale armed uprising of Ukrainian nationalists began in the city. - M.S). With great difficulty, overcoming traffic jams, the division concentrated in the area by 2.00 25.6.41 ... 25.6.41 At 10 o'clock the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized

to develop the blow of the 6th Rifle Corps in its offensive, but the headquarters of the 6th Rifle Corps set an independent task for the tank division - to attack in the direction of a heavily fortified anti-tank area with a river and swampy terrain, without supporting the actions of the division with either infantry or artillery ...

On June 26, 1941, at 04:00, the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized corps to go to the area of Grudek Jagielonski, Sudovaya Vishnya with the task of destroying a column of 300 enemy tanks moving from Moscisk to Lvov. By 18 o'clock the division concentrated in ur. Zamlyne, but there were no enemy tanks in this area (in the area of combat operations of the 6th Army, at the tip of the Lvov salient, there were no German tank units at all. - M.S.). The division made an 85-kilometer march during the day. At 5 p.m., an order was received to concentrate the division in the Obroshin area and be ready for action on Lyuben Velki.

On June 27, 1941, by 07:00, the division concentrated in the area of Konopnitsa Zastava, Obroshin, with the task of destroying the enemy in the direction of Lyuben Velki. The division made a 40-kilometer march at night ... According to the headquarters of the corps, an enemy grouping was established in the area of \u200b\u200bLuben Velki, in fact, this grouping was not

*found ... " Although the geometric dimensions of the "throwing triangle" (of the 4 60 km to the side), the division, judging by the report of its commander, "for the first three days 23-25.6. made a total of 350 km march, without having a normal rest for the crews and the restoration of the materiel. Marches were made both day and night. The conduct of the marches is satisfactory, despite the insufficiently trained drivers. During this period, **the division did not conduct combat operations due to the absence of the enemy** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) in these areas " [28, pp. 181 - 189]. The infantry, in skirmishes with*

which the 4th MK participated, was not simple, but mountainous (1st and 4th mountain rifle divisions of the Wehrmacht). This, in particular, means that it was not armed with heavy 105-mm cannons, which, at least theoretically, could use conventional Wehrmacht infantry divisions to fight against the KV and T-34. The standard German 37-mm anti-tank gun in battle with

new Soviet tanks was practically useless, which was once again confirmed in the battles near Lvov. The commander of the 32nd TD writes in his report: *"The armor of our tanks cannot be penetrated by German 37-mm cannons; there were cases when the KV tank had up to 100 hits, but the armor was not pierced.* And here is how the battles

on the western approaches to Lvov are described in the history of the 1st mountain division of the Wehrmacht: *"... in the early morning of June 25, Russian tanks, one by one, appear on the edge of the forest near the village of Yazuv Stary ... Our 3,7- see the anti-tank gun calmly waiting for the tanks to approach at a distance sufficient for firing. When the distance is reduced to 600 m, the gun opens fire. Almost every shot is on target. Fire traces of shells are clearly visible. However, later we stop believing our eyes: our anti-tank shells simply bounce off the tanks. Without stopping, enemy tanks continue to approach us, firing from all guns..."* [152, p. 162]. Even the newest (for the summer of 1941) German 50-mm anti-tank gun turned out to be of little use in battle against the tanks of the 4th mechanized corps. In the description of the fighting of the 4th mountain division of the Wehrmacht

we read:

"The advance group went to the Grudek Jagielonski-Lvov highway. In the area of the village of Kaltwasser, the group met enemy tanks. The shells of 3.7 cm and 5 cm anti-tank guns were unable to penetrate their armor. Courageous gunners continued to fire from 5-cm guns even when the tanks were already 5 meters away from them. Tanks moved guns. The material losses were enormous..." [152, p. 209]. Desperate to "persuade" the commander of the 6th Army to transfer the entire 4th mechanized corps to participate

in the frontal counterattack, the commander of Yu-3. f. On the morning of June 24, he ordered the withdrawal of the 8th Panzer Division from the 4th MK and transfer it to the commander of the 15th MK, General Carpezo. However, in fact, the 8th TD reached the Radekhiv-Lopatyn region (60 km north-east of Lvov) only in the morning ... June 28!

Meanwhile, in the Yavorov-Niemirów area, the German infantry broke through the front of the 6th Army at the junction between the 97th and 159th rifle divisions of the 6th SC. On June 24, they tried to close this gap with the forces of 81-

th motorized division of the 4th MK. On the same day, three regiments of this division (tank, artillery and 323rd motorized rifle) were surrounded by German infantry in the Nemirov area. It is not entirely clear how the infantry can "surround" a tank regiment armed with **270 BT tanks**, but by the evening the rout was completed. All heavy equipment was lost, most of the personnel went missing, the commander of the 323rd SME was killed, the division commander, Colonel Varypaev, the deputy division commander, Colonel Barabanov, the division chief of staff, Colonel Spesivtsev, the chiefs of the operational and intelligence department of the division headquarters, the division's artillery chief, were missing, commander of the artillery regiment, chief of staff of the 323rd MSP. As for the 97th and 159th rifle divisions, on June 29, in the report of the Military Council of the 6th Army, their condition was described as follows: *The SD suffered significant losses, lost its leading command staff...* [29, p. 199].

While the 4th mechanized corps was tossing about in the "enchanted triangle" Nemirov - Mostiska - Lvov, another tank "hero" - the **8th MK of General Ryabyshev** - was moving towards the area of \u200b\u200bthe future tank battle in a wide, sweeping zigzag, like

skier in giant slalom.

On the eve of the war, the 8th MK was part of the 26th Army, which, according to pre-war plans, was to advance in the direction of Sambir - Rzeszow - Tarnow. Already at 10 am on June 22, an order was received from the army headquarters, according to which the corps was alerted and by the end of the day, having passed Sambir, went directly to the border river San. Then, on the evening of June 22, at 22:40, a new order was received - by 12:00 on June 23, the 8th MK (already passed 80 km west from Drohobych to San) was to concentrate in the Kurovichi area (25 kilometers east of Lvov, which means a retreat from the border by 120 km) and be placed at the disposal of the commander of the 6th army, Muzychenko. Multi-kilometer tank columns moved back, describing a huge hook with a length of more than 150 km along the route Sambir - Drohobych - Stryi - Lvov. In the middle of the day on June 23, when the main forces of the tank divisions were approximately

at the turn of the city of Nikolaev (38 km along the highway southwest of Lvov), and the 7th motorized division had already reached

outskirts of Lvov, Muzychenko ordered the 8th mechanized corps to turn west and concentrate in the forest south of Yavorov by 19:00 on June 23 (i.e., in the very area where Muzychenko, contrary to the orders of the front command, sent the main forces of the 4th MK). Huge columns of tanks, trucks, armored vehicles for the second time in the last 24 hours turned almost 180 degrees and again moved towards the border. Having made a tiring night march, the 8th mechanized corps, having traveled another 80-90 kilometers, went to Yavorov (see Map No. 4). There, late in the evening of June 23, the corps commander was handed a package with a new (and in fact, with the old, so to speak "initial") order of the front command: again deploy the corps and by the end of the day on June 24 go to the Brody area. But

that's not all. On the same day, Muzychenko made a last attempt to "save" at least one division from the 8th MK. In accordance with the combat order of the commander of the troops of the 6th Army No. 003 dated June 23, 1941, *"The 34th Panzer Division is part of the 6th Army with direct subordination to the Military Council of the Army. The divisions should be ready to strike in the directions of Nemirov, Yavorov, Krakovets"* [29, p. 185]. This attempt at arbitrariness was, however,

unsuccessful, and the 34th TD remained in the corps. Due

to traffic jams and street fighting in Lviv, make another forced march to the Yu-3 command indicated in the order. f. the deadline failed: by the evening of June 24, the main forces of the corps concentrated in Busk, and the 34th Panzer Division, which did not become drawn into the labyrinth of Lviv streets, went through Zholkev (Nesterov) to the Bug River near the town of Kamenka-Bugskaya. By this time, Kamenka had already been captured by the advanced German units, and they had to break through the city with a fight. Only by 6 o'clock in the morning on June 26, two tank divisions (12th and 34th) of the 8th mechanized corps reached the area of the city of Brody (i.e., to the starting area for inflicting a counterattack on the flank of the advancing German tank divisions), the third division of the corps (7th motorized division) was at that time on the march between Buek and Brody, lagging behind the tank divisions by 20-25 km.

Although the distance from Drogobych to Brody does not exceed 150 km in a straight line, the tank divisions of the corps passed (as is clear from the report of the commander of the 8th MK dated July 18, 1941) 500 km, "leaving on the

*the time of marches up to 50% of the availability of combat materiel" [28, p. 166]. Most likely, in such an assessment of the magnitude of "marching losses", a desire to justify oneself for the defeat of the corps is clearly visible (which defeat had already become a fait accompli by the time the report was written). So, in another text, Ryabyshev writes that "during a march of almost 500 km, the corps lost up to half of the tanks **of obsolete designs**." Finally, a simple summation of data on losses and the number of KV and T-34 tanks remaining in service leads to the conclusion that even after the fighting and losses of the first day of the offensive (June 26), the corps had another 141 "new types" tanks, which is 83 % of their original population. Be that as it may, the forced 500-km march could not but lead to a large number of breakdowns, and taking into account the fact that the territory on which the 8th MK rushed for three days and three nights was occupied by the enemy three or four days later , all temporarily out of order tanks moved into the category of "irretrievable losses".*

The combat operations **of the 22nd mechanized corps** in the Vladimir-Volyn direction ended in complete defeat . Apparently, the death in the first days of the war of the corps commander, Major General SM, played a fatal role. Kondrusev (from the memoirs of Marshal Moskalenko it follows that this tragic event occurred on the first day of the war and almost before his eyes, but General Vladimirovsky writes in his monograph that Kondrusev died on the evening of June 24, during or after the battle near the village of

Voinitsa). Two divisions of the 22nd mechanized corps (19th tank and 215th motorized) were stationed before the war in the city of Rovno. Having made a night march, they left by the morning of June 23 in the area of the city of Lutsk (see Map No. 4). After this, a leapfrog of orders from the front command and the 5th Army led to the fact that the 215th MD left along the Lutsk-Kovel highway. towards the mythical "tank grouping of the enemy", allegedly advancing from Brest to Kovel. The 19th TD also received an order to move to Kovel, but then the decision was changed and the 19th Panzer Division received the task at dawn on June 24, together with the 135th Rifle Division and with the support of the 1st PTAB, to counterattack the enemy advancing along the highway from Vladimir-Volyn

On the eve of the war, the 19th Panzer Division had a solid combat power. The artillery of the division had a full staffing

armament: 12 152 mm howitzers, 12 122 mm howitzers, 18 82 mm mortars and 27 50 mm mortars. For towing guns and evacuating wrecked tanks from the battlefield, the division had 52 tractors.

Allegedly absent in the Red Army, the means of radio communications in the 19th TD also were: 2 powerful RSB radio stations, 4 regimental 5-AK, 52 battalion radios (RB, 6-PK, RRU), as well as 85 radio stations 71-TK on guns and armored vehicles. The armored armament of the division included 158 tanks (122 T-26s, 7 flamethrower OT-26s, 12 BT-7s, 17 BT-5s) and 58 BA-10 cannon armored vehicles [8, 92]. The enemy (the

14th tank division from the 1st TGr of the Wehrmacht) was inferior in numbers (a total of 147 tanks, including 11 "commander tanks" with machine guns), but superior in quality: the 14th TD had 56 tanks Pz- III with a 50-mm cannon, which undoubtedly surpassed the light Soviet T-26s in terms of armor protection.

On the other hand, the 19th Panzer was supposed to go into battle together with the 1st PTAB, which by the beginning of the war had 120 guns (caliber 76 mm and 85 mm), which were guaranteed to penetrate the armor of any German tanks. Finally, the 21st artillery regiment of the RGK was also in the zone of the upcoming counterattack, armed with, in particular, 20 long-range guns of 122 mm caliber - guns of such power could penetrate the frontal armor of the KV, not to mention German tanks. The matter remained small: to establish interaction between the large forces of the Red Army concentrated in the area of the Vladimir-Volynsky-Lutsk highway, and to "smear the asphalt" of the 14th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht.

The further course of events is not entirely clear. From the memoirs of Moskalenko, it follows that on the 23rd and in the morning of June 24, the 1st PTAB fought fierce battles with German tanks and motorized infantry advancing along the highway to Lutsk, and without any interaction with parts of

the 22nd mechanized corps: "... **Agreed**, that at 4 o'clock in the morning (June 23. - M.S.) we will meet again, but already at the edge of the forest east of Zaturtsy (37 km along the highway west of Lutsk. - M.S.) to link the interaction. But neither Tamruchi (chief of staff, later commander of the 22nd MK), nor Artemenko (commander of the 27th rifle corps) appeared at the appointed time ... The brigade, moving east, occupied

defense in the area of Zaturtsy, dug in and camouflaged... Having never met Tamruchi and Artemenko, I realized that the brigade would have to fight the enemy on its own" [75, p. 33].

Slowly fighting back from line to line, the Moskalenko anti-tank brigade on the morning of June 24 took up defensive positions near the town of Torchin, 25 km west of Lutsk, and by the end of the day was already fighting in the suburbs of Lutsk. On the other hand, it follows from Vladimirsky's monograph that the oncoming tank battle took place in the area of the village of Voinitsa, i.e. **25 km west** of Torchin. *"The 19th Panzer Division had not yet arrived at the starting line by the morning of June 24, and therefore the counterattack, scheduled for 4 hours on June 24, was postponed to a later date ... The 19th tank division, which arrived at 13 hours on June 24, had in its consisting of **only 45 serviceable T-26 tanks and 12 armored vehicles** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) ... at 14:00 on June 24, in cooperation with the 135th rifle division, the 19th TD attacked the enemy in the direction of Pasek, Voinitsa .. At 5 pm on June 24, the enemy, having brought tanks into battle, again attacked the 135th rifle and 19th tank divisions ... As a result of a two-hour battle, the 19th tank division, having lost most of its tanks, and the 135th rifle division and the 1st artillery anti-tank brigade - a significant number of personnel and artillery materiel, began to retreat to a line 12-16 km west of Lutsk ... " [92].*

It is difficult to combine these two descriptions of the battles on the Vladimir-Volynsky-Lutsk highway. The author is inclined to believe Moskalenko, who was both a living witness and the main protagonist of these events. Most likely, the 1st PTAB and the 19th TD acted separately, and in the Voinitsa area on the afternoon of June 24, the strike group from the 19th TD and the 135th SD could only meet with part of the forces of the German 14th Panzer Division, since the advanced units of the 14th German Panzer Division at that time tried to break through the defenses of the Moskalenko brigade in the Gorchin area, i.e. were already much east of Voinitsa.

The only thing that does not raise any doubts is the tragic result of the oncoming tank battle near Voinitsa. Let's give the floor to Marshal Rokossovsky: "... by the evening of June 25 ,

the commander of the 19th Panzer Division, Major General Semenchenko, arrived on foot at the command post of our corps in the Klepan area (90 km east of Voinitsa. - M.S.) " in a very upset state, with bandaged right hand. He reported that his division

completely destroyed ... Soon one of the commissars of the regiment of the same corps turned out to be here, reporting the death of General Kondrusev and that the corps was broken. The decadent tone and confusion of the divisional commander and regimental commissar forced me to advise them quite impressively to immediately stop ranting about the

death of the corps ... " [111]. Unfortunately, these "rants" were not unfounded. This is how Moskalenko describes the meeting with the remnants of the 22nd MK that took place

on the afternoon of June 25: "... rear units and horse-drawn artillery from the units of the 27th rifle and 22nd mechanized corps unexpectedly rushed onto the bridge. Succumbing to panic, several hundred people, interfering with each other, tried to break through to the eastern shore. Their horses broke the noses between the sleepers, the wagons and guns were huddled together. A bottleneck has formed. And then the Germans opened artillery fire on the bridge. An unimaginable turmoil began..." [75].

The state of affairs in the 19th TD is convincingly evidenced by the fact that it took this tank division a **day and a half to march from Lutsk to Voynica (50 km)**, and **out of 158 tanks, only 45 reached the battlefield, and only 12 out of 58 armored vehicles** . In the battle near Voinitsa, the commanders of two tank and motorized rifle regiments of the division were killed. Most likely, such huge losses of command personnel were the result of a courageous but unorganized attempt by a handful of tankers remaining in the ranks to attack German medium tanks in the forehead on light T-26s with bulletproof

armor. Even stranger events took place in the 215th Motorized Division. On the morning of June 23, the division went to Kovel. Only on June 25 (that is, after the defeat of the 19th Panzer Division) did the 215th MD on the northern outskirts of Vladimir-Volynsky meet the 298th Wehrmacht Infantry Division advancing from the city

to the east. The 133rd Tank Regiment of the 215th Motorized Division was armed with 129 BT tanks

before the war. Moreover, before the attack on Vladimir-Volynsky, one of the tank regiments (according to other sources - two tank battalions) of the 41st Panzer Division was transferred to her (in addition to her "own"). Nevertheless, as Vladimirovsky writes, in the battle on June 25, the 215th MD acted as an infantry formation, *"without a tank regiment."*

Where did the tanks go? There are reports that the tank regiment of the 215th MD fell behind, allegedly due to the fact that it "used up fuel" - and this despite the fact that the total length of the route Rivne - Lutsk - Kovel - Vladimir-Volynsky is 190 km along the highway (significantly less than the cruising range of BT tanks), and in the warehouses of the 5th Army, fuel was stored in the amount of 33 (thirty-three) refueling [92]. The oncoming battle with the German infantry division ended with the fact that (according to Vladimirsky) the very next day, June 26, *"the 215th motorized division concentrated in the Sofiyanovka area, 50 km east of Kovel."* In other words, the division was defeated and pushed back 80 km northeast of the battlefield (as always, there was enough fuel for this march). 129 BT tanks from the 133rd TP simply disappeared without any mention in the sources known to the author. True, at the end of June, the 215th MD still had (according to Vladimirsky) 15 tanks, but these were T-26s, probably "nailed" to the division from other units.

The largest unit in the 22nd MK was the 41st Panzer Division. It was armed with 414 tanks (more than in the other two divisions of the corps combined), including 31 KV-2 super-heavy tanks armed with a 152-mm howitzer.

As noted above, on the first day of the war, the 41st Panzer Division left the main operational direction, from the Vladimir-Volynsky-Lutsk highway to the wooded and swampy region of Kovel. There, the division actually came under the command of the commander of the 15th Rifle Corps, the nominee Zhukov, Colonel I.I. Fedyuninsky. This personality is quite extraordinary. In June of the 41st, Colonel Fedyuninsky commanded generals (the chief of staff of the 15th SC was General Rogozny, the commander of the 45th division of the corps was General Sherstyuk). On October 8, 1941, the former corps commander, now Major General Fedyuninsky, takes command of an entire front from Zhukov's hands, and what a front - Leningrad! True, after 18 days this brilliant career growth rolled downhill, and at the final stage of the Great Patriotic War, General Fedyuninsky went into the shadows. And in June

1941, Colonel Fedyuninsky (as well as the commander of the 5th Army, Major General M.I. Potapov) ordered the powerful tank group that was in his hands enough

typical of those days. The division was immediately broken up into separate regiments, battalions, tank companies, which were instructed either to scour the swampy forest in search of non-existent German "landing forces", then to guard the headquarters, or to cover the withdrawal of the 15th SC from Kovel to the wilds of Polesye. If the 19th Panzer and the 215th Motorized fought for at least one day, then the story of the disappearance of the 41st Panzer Division does not lend itself to logical description at all.

After the death of General Kondrusev, the chief of staff of the corps, Major General Tamruchi, took command of the 22nd mechanized corps. However, "Description of the combat operations of the 41st Panzer Division of the Southwestern Front for the period from 22 to 29 June 1941." (TsAMO USSR, f. 229, op. 157, d. 712, l. 443-444) signed for some reason by the acting commander of the 22nd MK, regimental commissar Lipodaev, and the acting chief of staff of the corps, senior lieutenant (!!) Koretsky. What does all of this mean? How could a senior lieutenant be in the position of acting chief of staff of the mechanized corps? Where were the majors, lieutenant colonels and real colonels these days?

However, let's not find fault with the form in vain and move on directly to content.

On the very first page of the "Description of the hostilities of the 41st TD" we read:

"... At 17.00 on 22.6.41, by order of the army headquarters, a company of T-26 tanks was allocated to the Dubov area to eliminate the landing ... At 17.25 on 22.6.41, by order of the army headquarters, a company of T-26 tanks was allocated to eliminate the landing that landed on the Brest-Kovel

highway... At 23.00 on 23.6.41 a company of tanks from Captain Kulakov's battalion was assigned to fight 8 planes that had landed in the Novoselka area (tanks to fight planes? - M.S.). Having traveled all night, Captain Kulakov did not find any troops or planes ...

... At 17.00 on 24.6.41, by order of the commander of the 15th SC, together with the 45th rifle division, a company of tanks attacked in the direction of Lyuboml and lost 3 tanks. The attack took place without the support of the infantry ... " [8].

Do you understand, dear reader? The company attacked together with the division (a pug with an elephant), but at the same time there was no elephant? True, the description of the same episode in Vladimirsky's monograph looks much more solid:

"... at 14.30 on June 24, the 15th rifle corps, with the forces of the corps reserve brought into battle: the 104th rifle regiment, together with the 61st rifle regiment. The 45th rifle division, with the support of an armored train and a company of tanks of the 41st tank division, counterattacked threw the enemy

back from Lyuboml ... " Further in the text of the "Description of hostilities" there is no mention of the combat losses of tanks, but suddenly the phrase appears: *"After all these operations, out of 116 tanks, 9*

units remained." What does "out of 116 tanks" mean? By the start of hostilities, the 41st Panzer Division had not 116, but 414 tanks (according to Vladimirovsky, even more - 425). Where did all this armored armada go? Two tank battalions were (by order of the commander of the 5th Army) placed at the disposal of the 87th Rifle Division, and then at the disposal of the 215th Motorized Division (these are the same tanks that were not available during the first and last counterattack of 215 md). But the absence of two battalions does not explain the mysterious transformation of

414 tanks into 116, of which *"9 units remained" ...*

Let's return again to the "Description of hostilities": on June 27, the 15th Rifle Corps left Kovel and began to retreat deep into Polesie. Tearing the remnants of the tank division into small pieces continued: *"On June 27, 1941, by order of the commander of the 15th SC, a company of tanks was allocated to cover the headquarters of the corps in the Kovel region, two companies in the Cherkassy region and one company in the Dubrava region to cover the withdrawal of the 15th SC from Kovel. During the withdrawal of units of the 15th S K, by order of the head of the garrison (what garrison? What is he "head" for a tank division?), 5 tanks of the design bureau were blown up. Do you think it's easy to blow up a 52-ton "steel turtle"? It would be much easier to drain the fuel from the tanks, bury it in the ground and use it as a ready, powerful pillbox, invulnerable to enemy field artillery ... By the end of June, they joined with the main forces of the 5th Army. That, in fact, is the*

whole brief history of the 22nd mechanized corps. The death of the commander, the collapse of management and the collapse of the "armored fist" into separate pellets, the death of the few tankers remaining in the ra

battle near Bojnica, where instead of 712 corps tanks, only 57 combat vehicles went into the first and last attack on the enemy. *"Armored, shock battalion ..."*

Events equally incomprehensible to the mind took place in the Radekhovsky direction, where **the 15th mechanized corps** was supposed to counterattack the 11th Wehrmacht Panzer Division advancing deep into the

defense of the Soviet troops. The 15th MK included three divisions: the 10th and 37th tank divisions, and the 212th motorized division. Historians have at their disposal three reports on combat operations: both the mechanized corps as a whole and each of its tank divisions [29, p. 253, 28, p. 193, p. 217]. Unfortunately, the apparent abundance of information

does not at all contribute to clarifying the situation. Not to mention the fact that the number of tanks in the divisions of the corps in various documents varies by dozens of units - although, it would seem, the compilers of reports and reports did not consider candy wrappers, but military equipment that was extremely expensive and "scarce" in the war. According to the available documents, it is impossible, at least in general terms, to clarify the unfortunate question of the staffing of the 15th mechanized corps with vehicles and artillery mechanized traction equipment. Again, we are not talking about a "miracle" common to the entire Red Army, as a result of which, in the presence of a huge amount of vehicles (even BEFORE the announcement of open mobilization, on average, each of the 303 Soviet divisions had 900 vehicles and 112 tracked tractors and tractors) **mechanized** corps the first echelon of troops of the border districts found themselves without the regular number of tractors, trucks and tankers. The specific figures in the

reports of the commanders of the same unit strikingly do not match. In total, the 15th MK on June 10, 1941 (that is, even before the start of the war and the mobilization of equipment from the national economy) had 2035 vehicles (of all types and purposes), 50 artillery tractors (Voroshilovets, Komintern, ħ-2) and 115 tractors [8]. According to the report of the acting commander of the 10th TD, by the beginning of hostilities, the division had (in total, taking into account faulty equipment) 962 vehicles

"to the share" of the other two divisions of the corps? We open the report of the acting commander of the

15th MK and read: "... *the 212th motorized division, having almost complete supply of personnel for the Red Army, **did not have at all*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *vehicles for transporting personnel and could not even provide themselves with vehicles for the transport of ammunition, food and fuel and lubricants, as well as for the transport of weapons. The artillery regiment had 8 - 76-mm guns, 16 - 122-mm guns and 4 - 152-mm guns, and there **were only traction means for one division**, and then without rears ... The anti-tank division of the 212th MD **did not have traction means*** (strange, but, judging by the report of the commander of the 15th MK, already on April 25, 1941, there were 27 Komsomol members, 20 tractors and 6 Komintern tractors in the 212th MD. - M.S.) ".

Where. same "walk" nearly a thousand cars and tractors? Maybe they all ended up in the second tank division of the corps? Nothing like this. "*The motorized rifle regiment of the 37th Panzer Division **had no vehicles**. The artillery regiment of the 37th TD was composed of 12 122-mm guns without panoramas (???), 4 152-mm guns and a **total of 5 tractors** ...*" According to the report of the acting

corps commander, in the artillery regiment of the 37th TD by the beginning of combat actions were 12 howitzers of caliber 122 mm and 4 howitzers of caliber 152 mm. In the report of the commander of the 37th TD, the number of artillery weapons of the division is expressed as a percentage. It can be assumed - as a percentage of the staffing. Namely: "*122-mm howitzers - 56%, 152-mm howitzers - 33.3%*". 33% of the regular number of 152-mm howitzers is, in simple terms, 4 guns. This figure coincides with the report of the acting commander. But 56% of the regular number of 122-mm howitzers is 6.72 howitzers. It doesn't match anything anymore. In particular, it does not coincide with the further text of the report of the commander of the 37th TD, from which it follows that 4 122-mm howitzers were deployed on the campaign, and another 21 122-mm howitzers were left at the place of permanent deployment of the division. Total - 25 guns out of an incomprehensible number

Of course, these are all petty quibbles. The number "21" is most likely a typo. But is it possible to consider such facts as insignificant "trifle" (again, if these "facts" were in fact):

"... *The regimental artillery was sent to the regiments almost all of the faulty ones ... The personnel of the corps motorcycle regiment*

never fired ... The division did not receive assigned vehicles from the national economy. 8 representatives were sent to the reception point for assigned vehicles Shepetovka, but after staying there for several days, they returned back without a single vehicle, saying that the vehicles intended for our division had gone to one of the fortified areas (i.e. vehicles intended for MECHANIZED unit, left for a fortified area that was FIXED by definition. - M.S.) ... For the entire period of the fighting, the division could not get a single shell for 37-mm anti-aircraft guns from anywhere ... They did not have air reconnaissance data until 25.6.41. and in the future too ... There was no support for the division from our aviation during the entire period of hostilities ... "

As wild as it sounds, there were no armor-piercing 76-mm shells for tank guns in one of the most powerful mechanized corps of the Red Army. Or almost none. It's hard to say exactly. In the report of the commander of the 10th Panzer Division (63 KV tanks and 38 T-34s), we read: *"For the first three days of fighting, the division did not have a single armor-piercing projectile for 76-mm guns."* In the report, the corps commander said the same thing a little differently: *"For the first 3 days of fighting there were no armor-piercing shells (in the 19th and 20th tank regiments of the 10th TD there*

were only 96 armor-piercing shells per regiment)." Armor-piercing shells of 76 mm caliber in the Red Army were really negligible. This is a real, albeit logically inexplicable fact (more than 19 million pieces of high-explosive fragmentation and anti-aircraft shells of the same 76-mm caliber were accumulated, and only 132 thousand pieces of armor-piercing ones). As a result, as of May 1, 1941, on average, for one 76-mm gun in the Kiev Special Military District, there were 18 armor-piercing shells [168, p. 261]. Average. In accordance with the Directive of the chief of staff of the district No. 0054 of April 29, 1941, the available, very modest, stock had to be distributed

wisely, namely (68, p. 23): "... Provide armor-piercing shots to parts of the district

according to the *following calculation: - for each 76-mm cannon of rifle divisions, 6 shots; - cavalry, motorized rifle divisions and units of the UK-repions, 12 shots each ...*

- for each 76-mm cannon **on KV tanks, 25 shots** (emphasized by me. - M.S). - **on T-34 tanks,**

13 shots each ... " One or two dozen

armor-piercing shells in a tank's ammunition load are not so few. In the end, armor-piercing shells (unlike high-explosive fragmentation) are not fired in tens of thousands "in areas". One or two hits of a 76-mm armor-

piercing projectile in the summer of 1941 was quite enough to destroy any German tank. And if the order of April 29 had been fulfilled by June 22, then the 10th Panzer Division should have had more than 2,000 armor-piercing 76-mm rounds. Theoretically, this could be enough, if not for the entire 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht, then for that single German division (11th Panzer, 143 tanks), which the 10th Panzer faced. But it wasn't enough... Traditional Soviet historiography calls it "unpreparedness for war." Did not have time. "History has given us little time ..." Before the war, the divisions of the 15th MK

(10th TD, 37th TD, 212th MD) were deployed, respectively, in the areas of Zolochiv, Kremenets, Brody. As we noted above, *"the 212th motorized division, having almost complete security with the personnel of the Red Army, did not have any vehicles for transporting personnel."* The lack of vehicles (we will assume that such a lack was available) and horses turned it into a sedentary rifle division, however, reinforced by a group of 37 light tanks and 17 T-37/40 amphibious tankettes: However, the low mobility of the 212th MD in reality didn't bother her at all. In accordance with the order of the front command, the 212th MD was withdrawn from the corps from the very beginning of the war and **left at its permanent quartering site**, in the city of Brody, with the task of defending this important road junction. Thus, having not yet fired a single shot, the 15th MK was already left almost without infantry (only the motorized rifle regiment of the 10th TD took part in the hostilities on June 23-26). Judging by all reports, the 212th division defended Brody until June 28, when this city was occupied by German infantry without any fight. However, from the memoirs of Ryabyshev and Popel it is clear that they did not find any division in Brody at all ...

The fighting of the tank divisions of the 15th MK began at 09:50 on June 22, when the advance detachment of the 10th TD as part of the 3rd battalion of the 20th tank regiment and the 2nd battalion of the 10th motorized rifle regiment advanced to the border along the route Zolochiv - Radekhov. In the evening, at 10 p.m., the detachment met with the enemy *"with a force of up to two infantry battalions with anti-tank guns"* (probably, these were the advanced units of the 57th Wehrmacht Infantry Division, which broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops in the Sokal-Krystynopol area). *"As a result of the battle, 6 enemy anti-tank guns and up to an infantry platoon were destroyed. Our losses are 2 tanks. By the end of June 22, Radekhov occupied the advance detachment ..."* This was the first and, alas, the last success of the 10th Panzer Division, and indeed the entire 15th Mechanized Corps.

In the meantime (at 6 p.m. on June 22) the main forces of the 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions began advancing towards Radekhov-Lopatin. The task was set by him in the highest degree resolutely: *"to destroy the Sokal enemy group, preventing it from retreating to the western bank of the Bug River"* (i.e., on the first day of the war, the Soviet command was concerned about how to prevent the aggressor from escaping back to the adjacent territory). With the start of the movement, the tank regiments of the 10th TD got stuck (about 15-20 km from the places of permanent deployment) in the swamps, and the units of the 37th TD *"at 14.00 on June 23 received from the arrived commander of the 15th mechanized corps, Major General Karpezo enemy tanks in the Adama area. Subsequently, it turned out that there were no enemy tanks in the Adama area ..."*

While units of the 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions wandered through forests and swamps, the Wehrmacht's 11th Panzer Division met at 05:15 on June 23 on the outskirts of Radekhov with the advance detachment of the 10th Panzer Division. A fierce unequal battle ensued, in which the German division was opposed not by the 15th mechanized corps and not by one of its divisions, but only by two battalions without armor-piercing shells for the T-34 guns. *"The results of the battle: 20 enemy tanks, 16 anti-tank guns and up to an infantry platoon were destroyed. Lost: BT tanks - 20 pieces, T-34 - 6 pieces, 7 people were killed, 11 people were injured, 32 people were missing ..."*

Finally, at three in the afternoon on June 23, two regiments of the 10th Panzer Division approached the battlefield (the 19th Panzer Regiment continued to wallow in

swamp and the distance of 40 km from Brody to Radekhov has not yet been overcome). *"The attack of the motorized rifle and 20th tank regiments of the 10th tank division without artillery support, in the presence of clearly superior (???) enemy forces located at an advantageous line, was unsuccessful, and Radekhov remained behind the enemy. 5 enemy tanks and 12 anti-tank guns were knocked out ... "* There is nothing about the division's own losses in this battle in the commander's report said.

This strange battle on June 23, during which Soviet tankers were forced to scratch the armor of enemy tanks with fragmentation shells, turned out to be the **first and only** clash of the 15th mechanized corps with German tank formations (strictly speaking, in mid-July 41, the remnants of units of the 15th MK in the form of a detachment of 21 tanks and a combined motorized infantry battalion under the command of the commander of the 10th TD, Major General Ogurtsov, took part in a multi-day tank battle near Berdichev). The Germans, feeling increasing pressure on the southern flank of the 1st TGr, left Radekhov for Berestechko (where on the evening of June 23 they captured the most important crossings across the Styr River) and further from Berestechko along the highway to Dubno (see Map

No. 4). Meanwhile, the units of the 15th mechanized corps (like a boxer in the ring, dancing before striking) made some kind of chaotic movement inside the "triangle" Radekhov - Brody - Buek. Parts of the 10th and 37th TDs, continuously replacing each other at different initial lines, driven by orders from the corps and front command, were preparing either for an attack on Berestechko, or for a second attack on Radekhiv, or for repelling the offensive of a non-existent enemy who had "broke through" to Brody, or even to retreat to Teropol ... Although the geometric dimensions of the named "triangle" do not exceed 50-60 km per side, the 10th and 37th tank divisions worked out (judging by the report of the command of the 15th MK) 10-13 hours per day!

All this confusion ended at six o'clock on the evening of June 26 with a scene quite worthy of a horror movie. In the

report on the combat operations of the 15th MK we read: *"18 enemy aircraft heavily bombed the command post of the corps ... The bombing continued for 50 minutes, as a result, 2 Red Army soldiers were wounded and 1 was killed."* 18 planes, 50 minutes of bombing,

losses - 3 people? During this raid, the corps commander, Major General Ignatiy Ivanovich Karpezo, was killed. Colleagues immediately, in the forest near the town of Toporuv, buried the general. But then Ivan Vasilyevich Lutai, the deputy commander for political affairs, arrived at the broken corps command post, in other words, the corps commissar. He arrived, listened to the report on the death of the commander - and ordered to dig a fresh grave.

Front-line writer V.V. Karpov, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU of the last term, the last First Secretary of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR, in his famous book of praising the wisdom of "Marshal of Victory" Zhukov, gives the following explanation for the actions of the commissar: Ivan Vasilievich, they say, lost his temper from grief and began to fight over the grave, like a hysterical young lady ... It's hard to believe in such a thing. Our commissars had a biography and upbringing too harsh to be presented in this way. The haste of his subordinates, apparently, alerted Lutai, and he, rather, with a revolver in his hand than with tears on his face, decided to personally investigate the cause of the death of the corps commander. The grave was dug up - Carpezo was alive, however, unconscious, in a severe concussion. The vigilance and perseverance shown by Lutai saved the general (I.I. Karpezo lived until 1987 and passed away at the age of 89), but no one managed to save the 15th MK from the defeat, to which he was already rolling irresistibly. **The 16th**

mechanized corps could not take any part in the tank battle in the "triangle" Radekhov - Brody - Dubno . For the first four days of the war, this mechanized corps (like the entire 12th Army as a whole) was practically inactive on the Hungarian border. Then the 16th MK was transferred to the troops of the inactive Southern Front. The fact is that the commander of the Southern Front Tyulenev "discovered" in Romania as many as 6 non-existent tank and motorized enemy divisions and urgently requested reinforcements. Tyulenev was a big man: an army general by rank (there were only five people in this rank in the entire Red Army) and a former commander of the capital's military district. They believed him and sent the 16th MK from the passive to an even more passive sector of the war front. Then, when the catastrophe in Belorussia became a fait

accompli, on July 4, 1941, the Headquarters ordered the urgent transfer of the 16th MK by rail to the Western Front, in the Mozyr area. But leave

the southern theater of operations was not destined for the 16th mechanized corps. Already during the redeployment begun, on July 8, the mechanized corps was unloaded from the trains and thrown into battle in the Berdichev area, where German tanks broke through the line of fortified areas on the old border. For several days, until July 15, a fierce battle flared in the Berdichev-Kazatin region, during which units of the 16th MK suffered heavy losses, and the corps actually ceased to exist as a tank formation. The remains of the 16th MK and its courageous commander, divisional commander A.D. Sokolov, died in the "boiler" of the encirclement near the city of Uman.

The advancement of the mechanized corps was somewhat more organized. the second echelon - **the 9th MK Rokossovsky and the 19th MK Feklenko.**

Rokossovsky in the very first hours of the war, with his power, seized the district motor depot in Shepetovka and put his 131st motorized division on the trucks "captured" there. Thanks to this arbitrariness, the 131st MD, despite the disrupted, as elsewhere, mobilization of vehicles from the national economy, was able to reach Lutsk on June 23, overtaking both tank divisions of the 9th MK on the march. After that, the commander of the 5th Army, General Potapov, withdrew this division from the mechanized corps (*"it was done over the head of the corps commander,"* Rokossovsky angrily notes in his memoirs) and put it on the defensive at the line of the Styr River. This decision, although it weakened the already very modest capabilities of the understaffed

9th mechanized corps, turned out to be correct and timely. The 131st Motorized Division then saved the situation and prevented a breakthrough of the 5th Army front, which was clearly brewing on June 25 after the defeat of the 22nd Mechanized and 31st Rifle Corps. On June 24, the tank divisions of the 9th mechanized corps entered the concentration area and entered into battle with the advanced units of

the 13th tank division of the Wehrmacht, which was trying to break through to the Lutsk-Rovno highway in the area of \u200b\u200bthe village of Klevan (30 km west of Rovno). As Rokossovsky writes, *"At dawn on June 24, the 20th TD attacked the motorized units of the German 13th Panzer Division located at a halt in the Olyk area, inflicted heavy damage on them, captured prisoners and many trophies ... Having entrenched, the entire division day successfully repulsed the attacks of the approaching enemy tank units ... "* Success

all the more impressive if we take into account that before the start of hostilities, the 20th Panzer Division had only 36 (thirty-six) tanks, of which 30 were discontinued in 1934 by light BT-5. In fact, the only relatively combat-ready tank division in the 9th MK was the 35th TD, which was armed with 142 T-26 light tanks. But this division also met the war with a meager amount of vehicles and mechanized traction (188 cars and 7 tractors) and half the regular number of artillery (4 howitzers of 152 mm caliber and 6 howitzers of 122 mm caliber).

The commander of **the 19th MK**, Major General N.V. Feklenko was less fortunate than Rokossovsky: there was no ownerless motor depot in Zhitomir and Berdichev, and the route of the upcoming advance of the 19th MK was 100 km longer than

that of Rokossovsky's corps. Nevertheless, by the morning of June 25, the 19th mechanized corps, having covered more than 200 km on its extremely worn-out T-26 tanks, reached the initial deployment area. The high pace of the march was due to the competent and proactive actions of its commander. In fact, Feklenko did exactly what the high command should have done on the scale of all the tank forces of the Red Army - to reduce the exorbitantly inflated number of mechanized formations and, through this, bring the staffing of the few remaining to full-time standards.

As Vladimirsky writes, *"before going on a campaign, each tank division of the 19th mechanized corps was divided into two echelons - mobile and foot. The mobile echelons included all serviceable tanks, consolidated into tank regiments (one consolidated tank regiment per division), as well as the personnel of the motorized rifle regiment and special forces divisions, which could be transported by cash vehicles. The rest of the divisions, which were not provided with vehicles, were included in the foot echelons, and the faulty tanks were left at a repair base in Novograd-Volynsky ... "* (i.e. lagged behind the main forces of the corps by 150 km and later fought as part of the 16th army of General Lukin near Shepetovka, did not take part in the hostilities of the 19th MK). Thus, the 19th mechanized corps (as well as the corps

Rokossovsky) was left without motorized infantry, which further reduced its modest combat capabilities.

The 19th MK was the first of all the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front to enter the tank battle near Dubno. On the night of June 26, the forward detachments of the 40th and 43rd Panzer Divisions reached the outskirts of Dubno, where an oncoming battle began with motorized infantry and tanks of the 11th Panzer

Division of the Wehrmacht. Paying tribute to the initiative, courage and determination of General Feklenko, we will also take into account the fact that due to the collapse of the entire communications and control system on the Southwestern Front, the commander of the 19th MK was spared for four days from receiving any instructions from higher authorities. It is not yet known what the situation would have been if he (as, for example, the commander of the 8th MK Ryabyshev) received three different orders a day ...

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

It was on this day, at 9 o'clock in the morning, in accordance with the decision of the command of the South-Western Front, that a counterattack by four mechanized corps of the front was to begin on the enemy tank grouping that had broken through to Dubno. It was this day that became

the first day of the tank battle. Before proceeding to a detailed description of the course and result of this operation, we will try to present as accurately as possible the results of the four-day operational deployment of Soviet troops, their deployment, as well as the composition and disposition of enemy forces. There was no front line, in the truest sense of the word, in Western Ukraine that day. There were separate areas of hostilities, separate lines of defense of the units of the 5th and 6th armies that had not yet lost their combat effectiveness, as well as roads and bridges along which (often mixed with each other) mechanized columns of Wehrmacht and Red Army tank divisions moved.

In general, the situation is on the northern flank of Yu-3. f. developed as follows (see Map No. 4). On the right flank of the 5th Army, in the wooded and swampy region of the Ukrainian Polissya, the German infantry slowly advanced in the direction of Kovel. In the defense zone of the 6th Army, the German infantry pushed the Soviet troops back 40-50 km from the border, to the line of the

cities of Yavorov and Zholkev (Nesterov). On the direction of the main attack, in a narrow 50-kilometer "corridor" at the junction of the 5th and 6th armies, two enemy tank corps advanced: the 3rd TK as part of the 14th and 13th tank and 25th motorized divisions and the 48th TK as part of the 11th and 16th tank and 16th motorized divisions. They moved along two practically parallel routes: the 3rd TC - in the direction of Lutsk - Rivne, the 48th TC - to Berestechko - Dubno. By the end of the day on June 25, German tank columns stretched for tens of kilometers, so it is almost impossible to indicate any exact location of each of the above divisions. The 48th TC achieved the greatest advancement: the 11th TD, advancing in the first echelon, having occupied Dubno with the main forces, advanced detachments were already advancing on Mizoch-Ostrog, and the divisions of the second echelon

motorized) stretched for 50 km along the Berestechko-Kozin-Kremenets road (see Map No. 6).

The 3rd TK of the Wehrmacht, which met stubborn resistance from the Soviet troops on the Lutsk highway in the first days of the war, occupied Lutsk on June 25 at the cost of heavy losses, but could not move further to Rivne on the move. Then the German command decided to "rebuild the ranks" somewhat: the 14th TD and the 25th MD began to fight their way to the northeast, to the Goryn River, in the area of Tsuman - Klevan - Derazhno, and the 13th TD went south to Dubno, probably with

the aim of accessing the Dubno-Rivne highway (see Map No. 5). Thus, three of the four German tank divisions (13th, 14th, 16th) were concentrated on the morning of June 26 in the vicinity of the city of Dubno. By the start of hostilities, these three divisions had only **438 tanks**, including **139 Pz-III**s with a 50-mm cannon and **60 Pz-IV**s. That's all the enemy forces that theoretically could take part in the "largest tank battle near Dubno." In fact, taking into account the losses suffered by the Germans during the four days of the offensive, they should have had even fewer combat-ready tanks. As for another tank corps (14th TK as part of the 9th TD and two motorized divisions of the SS troops), which was part of the 1st TGr of the Wehrmacht, it was in the reserve of the group commander and by this time had not yet crossed the Soviet border - and for the simplest reason. On June 26, Halder makes the following entry in his diary: *"Von Wittersheim's tank corps, which is still in reserve, cannot be moved to the front due to extremely bad roads, which are already overloaded with convoys and cannot be used to transfer tanks ..."* [12]. What could the command of the

Southwestern Front really oppose to these enemy forces? The 22nd MK was already defeated, the

16th MK was transferred to the Southern Front, the small and poorly equipped 24th MK remained in the front reserve, the most powerful 4th MK under the leadership of Vlasov and Muzychenko simply ignored the orders of the front command and from participating in the planned counterattack he withdrew himself. Thus, on the morning of June 26, four mechanized corps could take part in a tank battle: 9th, 19th, 15th and 8th. A wedge driven by German tank divisions from Radekhov to Dubno divided the shock

the grouping of the South-Western Front into two unequal parts: a weak "northern" (9th MK Rokossovsky and 19th MK Feklenko) and an incomparably more powerful "southern" (8th MK Ryabyshev and 15th MK with attached to it 8- th Panzer Division of the 4th MK).

Even taking into account the losses and confusion of the first days of the war, the Southwestern Front still had huge forces at its disposal. By the beginning of the war, the "southern" strike group alone included more than 1.5 thousand tanks. The qualitative superiority was also indisputable: five hundred newest KV and T-34s against two hundred medium (in every sense of the word "medium") Pz-III and Pz-IV tanks in three German tank divisions. Initially (Combat order of the front headquarters No. 0015 dated 21.00 June 24)

command Yu-3. f. planned to launch a counteroffensive on the morning of June 25, but, making sure that the 8th mechanized corps and the 8th tank division of the 4th mechanized corps did not even have time to reach the starting area (not to mention the time required for reconnaissance of the area and reconnaissance enemy), postponed the start of the counterattack on the morning of June 26. The combat order of the front headquarters No. 0016 read:

"1. By the evening of June 25, 41, the enemy concentrated in the Radzechow area up to two or three armored and one motorized divisions.

The main task of the troops of the right wing of the Southwestern Front is the defeat during 26.6.41 of the enemy's Radzekhuv grouping.

2. Inflict the main blow on the mechanized enemy group with the 8th and 15th mechanized corps, the last with the 8th tank division, in accordance with the tasks assigned to these formations by order No. 0015 on 25.6.41. 4.30 26.6.41 The beginning of the attack - 9.00 26.6.41

From 04:00, the air force of the front will start bombing at places where enemy tanks are concentrated in order to suppress as much as possible by the start of the attack. The attack should be preceded and accompanied by powerful air strikes. 3. Commander of the 5th Army, Major

General Potapov, to unite the 9th and 19th mechanized corps under his command and take them to the starting line for an attack on the Grudek, Rymno front (both points 8 km southwest of Lutsk) in order to assist 8 th and 15th mechanized corps in the defeat of the Radzechow

grouping attack along the railway (Lutsk, Brody). To take the starting line by 04.30 26.6.41. The beginning of the attack - 09.00 26.6.41.

4. Designation of their location by tanks - a series of red rockets. Identification signs of aviation - swaying to the left wing" [29, p. 28]. Order No. 0016 could

not be carried out even theoretically: the enemy tank group had already left the area of the city of Radekhov and went east, to Dubno, and beyond. The indicated starting line for the attack of the "northern" grouping (Grudek - Rymno, south-west of Lutsk) was occupied by the enemy a day ago; As for the 9th and 19th MKs, they were only just reaching the area of the city of Rovno (i.e., they were located 60-80 km east of the initial area indicated by him). As a result, instead of a strike from the south and north in the general direction to Berestechko, which was envisaged in orders No. 0015 and 0016, the "southern" group tried to advance from Brody to Berestechko, and the "northern" - from Rivne to Dubno.

This discrepancy alone made it difficult to organize interaction between the "southern" and "northern" groups. In reality, there was no interaction at all. Judging by the documents of the command

of the mechanized corps and the post-war memoirs of the surviving generals, the command of Yu-3. f. did not even inform the commanders about the plans and actions of the neighbors. So, the former commander of the 8th MK, General Ryabyshev, writes that only in the afternoon of June 27 (twenty-seventh) June, the head of the *armored forces of the front, Major General R.N., arrived* at the command post of the corps. *Morgunov. He said that the 9th Mechanized Corps of Major*

General K.K. Rokossovsky from the Klevan area, and the 19th mechanized corps of Major General N.V. Feklenko is from the Roeno area. This information was unexpected for me. Then General Morgunov left for the 15th mechanized corps, and no

orders were received from him..." [113]. In the report on the combat operations of the 43rd Panzer Division (19th MK)

we read:

"... for the entire time of the march, up to 26.6.41, the headquarters of the division had no information from the higher headquarters about the situation at the front." But what has changed since June 26? We read further: *"... no data*

the headquarters of the division had no information about the enemy and the actions of our units at the front, our aviation also did not give anything for orientation in the situation ...

" [28, pp. 236, 237]. Twice Hero of the Soviet Union BC Arkhipov - in those days the commander of the reconnaissance battalion of the 43rd Panzer Division - in his memoirs writes:

"... when on the evening of June 26 ... our division reached Dubno, none of us knew that the 8th mechanized corps of General D.I. was successfully advancing towards us from the south. Ryabyshev ... A similar situation repeated itself the next day, when we and our neighbors, the arrows of the 36th Corps, went to the approaches to Dubno, but did not know that the 34th Panzer Division of Colonel I.V. had already broken into the city. Vasiliev from the 8th mechanized

corps ... " [109]. In the memoirs of Marshal Rokossovsky

we read: *"... No one was instructed to unite the actions of the three corps. They were introduced into battle separately and on the move ... According to individual reports, to some extent it was possible to judge what was happening in our direction. We did not know how things were going in the sectors of other armies of the Southwestern Front. Apparently, General Potapov was not in the best position. His headquarters for all the time that I commanded the 9th mechanized corps, never once could help us in this regard ...*

" [111]. To this should be added the fact that all commanders in all reports unanimously speak of the absence of any interaction with aviation, which not only did not " *accompany the attack with powerful air strikes*", but also did not provide the advancing tank units with fighter cover and reconnaissance information. It is already impossible to find a reasonable explanation for this, since Yu-3 aviation. f. By June 24, there were almost a thousand aircraft [190]. Where were they? Where did they fly? What could be a more important task these days than supporting the offensive of the front's tank attack group? Let us return, however, to a consistent presentation of events. In the early morning of June 26, the 43rd Panzer Division of the

19th Mechanized Corps moved into battle from the area south of

Rovno (see Map No. 5). Unfortunately, the mysterious "tank death" did not bypass this division, which covered itself in those tragic days with unfading glory: out of **237 tanks** available before the start of hostilities,

consolidated tank group consisting of **2 KV tanks, 2 T-34 tanks and 75 T-26 tanks.**

We learn about how events unfolded from the surviving report of the commander of the 43rd TD, Colonel I.G. Tsibina: "...

the command of the 43rd division stopped the retreating infantry and artillery of the 228th rifle division, positioned them and gave the order to join the battle together with the tank division. After the necessary order was restored, a decision was made to launch an immediate attack... The artillery of the division (43rd

gap), moving on a tractor traction at a speed of 6 km per hour, was still on the way and could not open fire by the beginning of the attack. The division did not have a single sortie at its disposal, so the division headquarters could not get any information about what was happening in the depths of the enemy's defenses, while enemy aircraft continued to dominate the air, corrected fire and monitored our actions ... At 14.00, the tanks of the division launched an attack, with two KV tanks and two T-34 tanks in front, turned

around on the move and upset the anti-tank defense system and the battle order of the enemy infantry, which began to retreat to the west in disarray. Pursuing the enemy infantry, our tanks were met by fire from enemy tanks from behind ambushes and from a place, but the KV and T-34s (of which there were only four in this division. - M.S.) rushed forward, the enemy tanks were attacked, and after them - and T-26 tanks ...

The enemy tanks, unable to withstand the fire and the rapid tank attack, began to retreat, lingering on the flanks, but were quickly knocked out by our tanks, which were maneuvering on the battlefield. Tanks KB and T-34, not having enough armor-piercing 76-mm shells, fired with fragmentation shells and crushed and destroyed enemy tanks and anti-tank guns with their mass ...

The battle lasted about 4 hours ... The enemy, retreating to Dubno, blew up the bridges behind him, thus depriving the division of the opportunity to break through to Dubno on the shoulders of its retreating infantry ... "[28, pp.

237-239]. Perhaps with some exaggeration, but on the other hand, the commander of the reconnaissance battalion describes this day much more clearly.

43rd TD BC Arkhipov (who entered the war already with the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union and ended it twice as a Hero). In their

he writes in his memoirs:

"... when on the evening of June 26 we drove the Nazis to Dubno, it was no longer a retreat, but a real flight. Parts of the 11th Panzer were mixed up, panic seized them. It was also reflected in the fact that, in addition to hundreds of prisoners, we captured many tanks and armored personnel carriers and about 100 motorcycles abandoned by the crews in good condition. On the approach to Dubno, already at dusk, the tankers of the 86th regiment saw that eight German medium tanks were attached to the tail of the column - apparently, they mistook them for their own. Their crews surrendered along with the vehicles at the very first request of our comrades. The prisoners, as a rule, were in a hurry to declare that they did not belong to the National Socialists, and very willingly testified. I had a chance to observe a similar psychological state of the Nazi troops, depression and panic again very, very not soon - only after Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk ... " [109]. The miracle, of course, did not happen. Tsibin's division, which had actually turned into a battalion of light tanks

even before the battle, was unable to take Dubno and defeat the two tank divisions (11th and 13th) of the enemy drawn to this city. The offensive of the 40th Panzer Division of the 19th Mechanized Corps developed even less successfully. This division was "tank" only in name - out of 158 combat vehicles, 139 were T-37 light tankettes with machine guns (the division had just begun its formation, and machine gun tankettes were used as combat training vehicles). To the north of Dubno, at the turn of the Ik-va River, the 40th Panzer Division was defeated in an oncoming battle with units of the 13th Panzer and 111th Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht. The 9th mechanized corps advancing from the north (more precisely, its two understaffed divisions without artillery and motorized infantry) could not help many. In the hope of the battle on June 26, Rokossovsky's corps was unable to break through the defenses of the 299th Wehrmacht infantry division and reach the connection with the 40th Panzer Division of the 19th Mechanized Corps.

In the next two days, the position of the "northern" grouping of Soviet troops deteriorated significantly. The Germans, having pulled up the 14th Panzer and 25th Motorized Divisions from the Lutsk region, themselves went over to

offensive from Dubno to Rovno and further to the Goryn River. Rokossovsky recalls:

"... Having left with a group of staff officers to a high-rise in the location of the units of the 20th Panzer Division leading the battle, I observed the movement from Dubno towards Rovno of a huge column of enemy vehicles, tanks and artillery.

And German units were coming and going to our line of defense from the south ... " With heavy fighting, the remnants of the 9th and 19th mechanized corps by June 28 were driven back 40-70 km from Dubno, to the Klevan-Tuchin-Gosha region, where they entrenched themselves at the turn of the Goryn River. The city of Rivne - the administrative center and an important road junction of Western Ukraine - was captured by the enemy. Nevertheless, the fighters and commanders of Rokossovsky and Feknenko completed their part of the overall task: the small and poorly armed "northern" group diverted three **of the four** tank divisions of the 3rd and 48th Wehrmacht corps, thereby greatly facilitating the situation much more powerful "southern" grouping. Figuratively speaking, the desperate attack of the 19th and 9th mechanized corps forced the Germans to turn their faces to the northwest, thereby exposing their almost unprotected back to the blow of the huge tank "cleaver" of the 15th and 8th mechanized corps.

Most likely, the Germans did not understand this then. It is strange and regrettable that the commanders of the Red Army, apparently, did not know either the real balance of forces, or the full benefits of their position. Here is how the commissar of the 8th MK Popel describes in his memoirs a meeting that took place at the headquarters of the corps on the eve of the offensive:

"... Tomorrow we will occupy the starting area and, in cooperation with the Carpezo corps (15 MK), we will inflict a flank attack on the enemy grouping, which, according to intelligence, consists of five tank (???) and four mechanized divisions ... I was estimating on a scrap papers - five tank and four mechanized - about two thousand (???) tanks ... The numerical and technical superiority (???) of the Germans forced us ... " Etc. The phrase about the "technical

superiority of the Germans", alas, is not accidental. Here is another fragment from Popel's memoirs:

"... The Germans shot down the bridge, and a projectile crashed right into the forehead of the tank crossing ... And it, as if nothing had happened, turns right and heads in our direction. It turns out that the German anti-tank guns do not take frontal armor. Helpful discovery! It lifts the spirit of our people..." [105].

Useful discovery??? Back in the thirties, the Soviet Union bought this same 37-mm anti-tank gun from Germany! Moreover, when during field tests it turned out that the actual armor penetration was lower than the declared one, a big scandal began (it turned out that the Soviet standards for assessing armor penetration were much tougher than the German ones) [87]. And why, then, did the Tevosyan commission travel in 1940 to all German tank factories? Why then was the best German tank Pz-III purchased at that time, why was it driven at the test site in Kubinka? Where did the results of these tests go, during which all characteristics were removed from the "troika", up to noise? It turns out that all these protocols, adorned with formidable stamps of "top secret", simply lay dead weight in the safes? After the 8th MK was forced to spend four days on pointless

marches, the front command demanded an immediate offensive. The choice of the direction of impact (from Brod to Berestechko) is at least strange. Even on the modern road map of Ukraine between these cities it is impossible to find a single decent road. The area is covered with forest with many small streams. And from Brod to Dubno, the main highway goes through completely open terrain - not a single "green" spot on the map ... The corps had to launch an attack without reconnaissance, without serious reconnaissance of the enemy, without artillery preparation. From

the promised air division, not a single squadron appeared in the sky until the end of the day. In fact, deployed to the left of the offensive line of the mechanized corps, two rifle divisions (139th and 141st), as Popel writes, *"have never heard of the offensive of the corps. And they could help a lot."* The neighbor on the left - the 15th mechanized corps - continued convulsive throwing through the forest in the Buek - Toporuv region and did not go on the attack on June 26. It was on the evening of June 26 that a nightmarish incident occurred with

by burying the living commander of the 15th MK in the ground, after which the corps lost its combat effectiveness for the whole next day (the attack on Berestechko of the 15th MK began only at noon on June 28). The 8th Panzer Division of the 4th Mechanized Corps, transferred to the operational subordination of the 15th MK, was still crawling at an average speed of 20 km per day from Lvov to Busk and did not take any part in the counterattack on June 26 ... And yet - "There is no reception against scrap." Despite all the ugly preparation and organization of the offensive, even acting alone, the 8th mechanized corps achieved some success on June 26.

12th Panzer Division, Major General T.A. Mishanina, with the support of artillery and motorized infantry, overcame the swampy terrain and by 11 o'clock in the morning crossed the Slonovka River. By 4 p.m., in a fierce battle, the 24th tank regiment of this division captured the village of Leshnev (20 km north of Brod). Leshnev also had the first tank battle, after which - as follows from Popel's memoirs - the few surviving German tanks were forced to flee: *"The Germans faltered and, under the cover of a Pz-IV platoon, took to their heels. They fled frankly, helplessly, cowardly ... Our KV shocked the imagination of the Nazis ..."* In the document (Report of the commander of the 8th MK on the combat operations of

the corps from June 22 to June 29, 1941), the events of June 26 are described much more restrainedly: " ... The *corps attacked the defending units of the 16th*

armored division of the enemy in the general direction of Brody, Berestechko, Boremel, but, having met organized resistance from the enemy, who covered himself with a swampy river impassable for tanks and destroyed all crossings across this river, he could not develop the pace of the offensive. Parts of the 12th Panzer Division, attacking the enemy, crossed the river. Slonowka and went to

the area of artillery positions, capturing the heights north of Leshniuv by the end of the day and destroying 3 batteries and 4 enemy tanks. In this battle, the 12th Panzer Division suffered heavy losses in personnel and materiel: 8 tanks

were hit in battle, 2 tanks got stuck in a swamp, in addition, all tractors of the artillery regiment and most of the gun crews were destroyed by enemy aircraft.

By the end of the day, the 34th Panzer Division captured the Khotyn, Redkow, Komoruvka area, destroying 3 batteries, 2 battalions of motorcyclists, captured two battalion headquarters and 4 enemy tanks ... In this battle, the 34th TD lost 5 tanks, of which 4 tanks were hit by the enemy and 1 tank burned down..." [28, p. 167].

Be that as it may, the corps advanced, and less than 20 km remained to Berestechko. It would seem that a little more - and the emerging success can be turned into a breakthrough on an operational scale. And these are by no means amateurish projects. General Ryabyshev writes in his post-war memoirs:

*"... The situation for the 8th mechanized corps was developing favorably. The grouping of Germans was covered not entirely, but in separate areas, its troops were scattered on the roads. In contrast, the formations of the 8th mechanized corps occupied an advantageous position on the flanks and rear of the enemy divisions ... Sending a report on the successful actions of the corps to the front headquarters, I believed that the commander would decide to build on the success of the corps, defeat the enemy and push **back him to the border***

(highlighted by me. — M.S.)" [113]. It is worth noting the gratifying fact that success was achieved at the cost of minimal (in comparison with the initial strength) losses of military equipment: the 12th Panzer Division lost 8 tanks in battle, two more got stuck in swamps, the losses of the 34th TD amounted to only 5 tanks. Now it only remained to achieve, finally, active actions from the 15th mechanized corps rushing through the forests, to establish cooperation with infantry and artillery, to cover the advancing guns from the air - and then only a miracle

could save the Germans from defeat. Miracles sometimes happen. Most often they are made by themselves. Remember how in books about ancient times they write: the criminal put his head on the chopping block, the executioner waved his ax - and just then the messenger jumps with the decree of "our good king" about pardon ... Something similar happened on the night of Ju

COMMANDING

In the description of N.K. Popel events unfolded as follows:

"... Oksen (chief of counterintelligence of the corps) burst into the dugout (command post of the 34th TD of Colonel Vasiliev). Barely saying hello, without apologizing, which was unusual for a balanced, invariably polite scout, he approached me. "Six Red Army men were detained in the rear of the division.

They claim that Mishanin's division (12th TD) is rapidly retreating, two generals have surrendered ... They swear that they saw the withdrawal of the division with their own eyes, but they know about the capture of the generals from words. The division, if you believe them, is retreating in a herd through the forest to the south ... " It was not possible to

establish radio contact with either the headquarters of the corps or with the command post of Mishanin's tank division. The radios were silent. Extremely alarmed, Popel rushed on the T-34 tank through the coniferous forest burning after repeated bombardments to Brody. But in the forest on the eastern outskirts of the city, at the place where the headquarters of the corps was located during the day, there was already no one: *"Not a soul. Empty dugouts. The wind lazily drives scraps of papers ... "* Soon, the car of the deputy chief of intelligence of the corps, Major Petrenko, drove into the forest clearing. He also confirmed the veracity of the incredible reports:

"... Mishanin's division left the front line ... On the way, they ran into its fighters several times. They wander anyhow. The commanders are not visible ... They assure that General Mishanin ordered to retreat to Brody, and he himself, together with the corps commander, surrendered ... "

The genre of this book is a documentary historical study, so we will not further intrigue the reader, especially since nothing mysterious has happened. No X-rays, no German landings, no earthquakes in the swampy forest - just the 8th mechanized corps was once again covered by a "shock wave" from another insane order from the command of the South-Western Front.

Marshal Baghramyan proudly writes in his memoirs that *"in the front headquarters did not feel even a shadow of confusion!*

Let's not argue. Let's take our word for it. There was no confusion. Everything else - communications, intelligence, reliable information about the state of their troops and enemy troops, firmness and

there was also no consistency in decision-making. On the evening of June 26, on the basis of panic rumors (which inevitably, like lice on a prisoner in a concentration camp, start up in the rear of a demoralized army) at the headquarters of the SWF. came to the conclusion that the counterattack that had begun in the morning had already ended in failure. The operational report of the headquarters of the South-Western Front No. 09 dated 06/26/1941 reported: *"The 8th mechanized corps at 9.00 on June 26 hesitantly attacked the enemy's mechanical units from the Brody area and was stopped by the enemy in the initial (???) to attack the area ..."* [29, p. 30].

Already this assessment of the situation, adopted at the very time when the 19th and 8th mechanized corps (unfortunately, without communication with each other) were advancing on Dubno and Berestechko, was completely inadequate to reality. Well, the decision made on the basis of such an assessment was quite strange. *"The chief of staff of the front took the floor,"* Bagramyan recalls. - *His idea boiled down to the fact that it was necessary to place the 36th and 37th rifle corps, approaching from the depths, on the line of Dubno, Kremenets, Zolochiv with the task of holding the enemy in stubborn defense. Withdraw the mechanized corps beyond this line"* [110].

Where is the logic, where are the traces of common sense? Even if we proceed from the fact that the mechanized corps of the front, which by that time still had 1,500 tanks, were unable to defeat or at least delay the advance of the enemy, then what were the grounds for hoping that two rifle corps would be able to cope with such a task? Didn't the front headquarters still know that rifle divisions, staffed to a large extent by conscripts from the western regions of Ukraine, scatter in crowds after the very first shots? And how can one set the task of *"removing it beyond this line"*, when there was still no equipped defensive line on the Kremenets-Zolochiv line, and the infantry of the 36th and 37th rifle corps had just entered this area? It is noteworthy that G.K. Zhukov (chief of the General Staff and plenipotentiary representative of the Headquarters on the Southwestern Front) directly warned **against such a decision:**

"... having learned that Kirponos intended to place the 36th and 37th rifle corps approaching from the depths on the defensive at the line of Dubno, Kremenets, Novy Pochaev, he resolutely opposed such use of the troops of the second echelon of the front: - If you strike, then by all means!

...Before flying to Moscow on June 26, G.K. Zhukov once again demanded from Kirponos to gather everything possible for a decisive counterattack..." [110].

The complete inconsistency of the decision taken on the evening of June 26 (which Bagramyan, even in his post-war memoirs without a shadow of embarrassment, calls "the most appropriate operational decision for the changed situation") was revealed not after a few days, but after a few hours - on the morning of June 27 .

Let's continue reading Bagramyan's memoirs: "..

We had no time to receive reports about the return of the 8th and 15th mechanized corps to their former lines, as the news swept through the headquarters: fascist tanks rushed to Ostrog. There is alarm at the front headquarters (but not a shadow of confusion. - M.S.) ... Colonel Bondarev excitedly reported that today (June 27. - M.S.) at dawn, the 11th German thin division made a swift breakthrough from the area Dubno. Having thrown back to the south the units of the right-flank division of the 36th Rifle Corps that were on the march, it is now advancing almost unhindered towards Ostrog ... "

That's the whole "defensive line occupied by rifle corps"! But even before the

German tank units launched an offensive from the battlefield near Dubno to the east, Moscow reacted to the decision of the SWF command. On the night of June 26-27, a high-frequency telegraph communication device "BODSO. Bagramyan recalls: "... I run to the negotiation room, pick up the tape, read:

"General Malandin (deputy chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. - M.S.) is at the apparatus . Hello. Immediately report to the commander that the Headquarters has forbidden the withdrawal and demands to continue the counterattack. Not a day to give rest to the aggressor. All". I hasten to Kirponos. After listening to my report, he quietly cursed ... " The

quiet curse of the big authorities resounded deafeningly in the troops. At dawn

on June 27, Popel finally found the headquarters of his mechanized corps on the southern outskirts of Brod:

"... we saw the corps commander on the side of the KB. Near the tank, without stopping, Ryabyshev paced back and forth as if wound up. I saw every comcor. But never like this... Ryabyshev, barely nodding to me, took a piece of paper folded in half from his breast pocket:

There are

several lines on the sheet, written in calligraphic clerk's handwriting. Round, with uniform thickenings of the letters, leaning against one another, leaned to the right. "The 37th Rifle Corps is defending on the front of Nov. Pochaev - Podkamen - Zolochiv. The 8th mechanized corps to retreat behind the 37th SC line and reinforce its battle formation with its own firepower. Exit start immediately. Below is the signature: "Commander of the

Southwestern Front, Colonel General Kirponos." And above the brackets there was a sweeping squiggle from the bottom up... Some kind of passenger

car was approaching from the south. Stopped nearby. A familiar colonel from the front headquarters got out of it. Unshaven, his eyes red from sleepless nights, he greeted us dryly and handed Ryabyshev an envelope. Dmitry Ivanovich tore off the wax seal, and we saw the same round, wearily leaning letters to the right and the same signature - a squiggle. Only the text is completely different: in the morning, the corps will advance from the Brody area in the direction of Verba-Dubno and capture Dubno by evening. Ryabyshev looked

dumbfounded at the colonel: "And the previous order?" The colonel was

not inclined to enter into a discussion: "As you know, the last one is being carried out..." [105]. It is

difficult to believe in all this, but the story with two orders of directly opposite content, received on the morning of June 27, as a whole, finds its confirmation in the documents. In the above-mentioned "Report of the commander of the 8th MK on the combat operations of the corps" we read:

*"... At 2.30 27.6.41, Major General Panyukhov arrived at the commander of the 8th mechanized corps and gave him the following **oral order** (highlighted by me. - M.S.) of the commander of the*

Southwestern Front: "37th rifle the corps is defending at the front of the Pochaev Novy, Podkamen, Zolochiv metro stations. 8th mechanized corps to retreat

infantry of the 37th Rifle Corps and reinforce its battle formation with its firepower. Exit start immediately. ... At 6.00 on 27.6.41, in the area 2 km south of Brody, through Brigadier Commissar Mikhailov, the second order of the commander of the Southwestern Front No. in the direction of Brody, m. Verba, Dubno..." [28, p. 167]. In the report on the hostilities of the 15th MK (signed by the Acting

corps commander Colonel Ermolaev) the events are described as follows:

"... June 27, 1941. On the basis of the order of the South-Western Front (the number of another order is clearly erroneously indicated and a completely unrealistic date - June 29. - M.S.) it was ordered to withdraw to the line of the Zolochovsky Heights behind the defensive line of the 37th Infantry cases to put yourself in

order. The commander of the 15th mechanized corps was given to the order to withdraw from the corps...

Brigadier Commissar Mikhailov, head of the Political Propaganda Directorate of the Southwestern Front, who arrived at about 10 o'clock at the command post of the commander of the 15th mechanized corps in the forest near Kashtelany, on behalf of the Front's Military Council, again transmitted the order to attack the corps in the direction of Berestechko ... "[29, p. 261].

As you can see, in his memoirs, Popel made a mistake only with the loan rank of the one who delivered the order to resume the offensive (for some reason, replacing Brigadier Commissar Mikhailov with "a familiar colonel from the front headquarters"). It is not entirely clear whether the order to withdraw was transmitted orally, or whether there was still a piece of paper with a "squiggle signature" ... In any case, it's time to interrupt our story about the tragic events of the 1941 ton in order to get to know each other better with the person who had the right to put his signature next to the words "Commander of the Southwestern Front."

People who personally knew General Kirponos speak differently about him.

Marshal K.S. Moskalenko writes about him warmly and respectfully: *"... He was a militarily educated person and proved to be a brave and strong-willed commander during the war with the White Finns... The brave, courageous general died - days of difficult*

trials, leaving a good and bright memory in the hearts of those who knew him..."

Commissioner Popiel gives a more mixed assessment to the

commander: *"... An impeccably brave and determined person, he has not yet matured for such a post. We talked about this among ourselves more than once, we spoke calmly, not seeing a big trouble here in peacetime, forgetting that the border district would turn to the front with the outbreak*

of hostilities ... "Marshal Rokossovsky describes his meeting with the commander of Yu-3. f. in very harsh

terms: "... I was extremely surprised by his sharply conspicuous confusion ... He tried to calm himself, but he did not succeed. He listened absently to my condensed information about the situation in the sector of the 5th Army and the corps, then often interrupted, running up to the window with exclamations: "What is the air defense doing? Airplanes fly and no one shoots them down. Ugliness." ... Yes, it was

confusion, because in the current situation at that time, another front commander, in my opinion, would not be up to air defense ... It seemed that he either did not know the situation, or did not want to know it. In those minutes, I finally came to the conclusion that such voluminous, complex and responsible duties are not up to this person, and woe to the troops entrusted to him ... "

Mikhail Petrovich Kirponos died on September 20, 1941 while trying to get out of the encirclement east of Kyiv. Whatever the circumstances of his death (there are three versions: death in battle, suicide, the Chekists carried out Stalin's secret order to prevent the capture of the top command staff of the front), General Kirponos gave his life for the Motherland, and this circumstance makes the author be extremely restrained in his assessments. Let's give General Kirponos the right to tell about himself on his own - fortunately, we have an autobiography at our disposal, written by him on October 21, 1938 [187]. Let us cite it with very slight abbreviations and brief comments: *"I was born on January 9, 1892 in the town of Verkievka,*

Chernigov province, in the family of a poor peasant. The farm had half a tithe of land,

house and nothing else. My father worked for a long time as a cupmaker in a tea shop (what kind of "peasant" is this?) in our town ... He began to study at a parochial school in 1899. In 1900 he moved to a zemstvo school in his own town ... General education - graduated from 3 groups of the Zemstvo school and in 1903 entered the 2-class school and the Borzensky school of gardening, but could not study there because of the difficult financial situation of my parents ... In December 1909, he entered

the service in the Korovyakovskoye forestry a forest watchman, in 1912 he was transferred to the Mikhailovsky forestry to the position of a cultural overseer (work in forest nurseries) with a salary of 12 rubles. per month. I served in this forestry until September 1915, i.e. before mobilization in the tsarist army. He served in the 216th reserve infantry regiment ... In May 1917 he graduated from the medical assistant's school (that is, he practically did not participate in the hostilities of the First World War). I was on the Romanian front from August 1917 to February 1918 in the 258th

regiment as a company paramedic... But during the October Revolution, I was agitating for Bolshevism among the soldiers. Here I was elected chairman of the regimental committee, a member of the divisional revolutionary committee ... Upon my return from the Romanian front, I initiated the organization of red partisan

detachments to fight the counter-revolution ... In September 1918, from the borders of Ukraine, he fled to the territory of the RSFSR, where he joined the ranks 1st Soviet division of the insurgent troops of Ukraine ... Held posts: pom. division chief, chairman of the Revolutionary Tribunal, commander of the 2nd Bogunsky

shelf...

On July 1, 1919, by order of Comrade Shchors, he was appointed assistant head of the school of Red commanders in the city of Zhytomyr ... Due to illness at the same school, he switched to non-combat work - the secretary of the military commissar of the school ... In

May 1920, he was appointed to the 2nd Kiev school of red foremen, where he worked in positions from the commander of the economic team to the commissioner of the school. From

the 23rd to the 27th - study at the Military Academy of the Red Army named after Frunze. In January 1931 he was appointed chief of staff of the 51st Infantry Division in

Odessa, in April 1934 from this position he was appointed head of the Kazan Infantry School, where I still work. Public work: during the

period of the struggle against the opposition, he actively worked to expose and withdraw from the Kharkov school the red foremen of the "ukapists", maintaining close contact with the organs of the Cheka. While studying at the Military Academy in the classroom, he revealed the anti-party face of the opposition. In 1927, Polischuk, political instructor, was exposed by me as a Trotskyist. In connection with his exposure, other Trotskyists were also identified ... In the Kazan Infantry School, he took an active part in exposing the enemies of the people Gobasov, Yusupov, Obryvaev, Pavlovsky and others ... In 1937, on my initiative, the deputy chairman of the Zelenodolsk City Council was involved and convicted for the criminal attitude to the compilation of voter lists ...

*Never any hesitation or deviation from the general line
I didn't and don't have a party.*

In 1937, a party penalty was imposed - a reprimand without entering into a personal file for overlooking fraud when passing the TRP standards of the 2nd stage ... I

married in 1911 to a citizen. (so in the text!) Olimpiada Vasilievna Polyakova (the daughter of a saddler), divorced her in 1919. After the divorce, my daughters were brought up with me ... The second time I married in 1919 Sofya Alexandrovna Piotrovskaya. I have three daughters from my second wife. My wife was born in Zhytomyr, she is Polish by nationality. Her father served as a watchman at the State Bank, they lived very poorly all the time. Before the revolution, the wife's father worked in restaurants as a waiter, and her mother prepared home-cooked meals without the use of hired force. My wife's brother, Yan Piotrovsky, left for Poland in 1924 or 1925, where he is and what he is doing, neither I nor my wife know ...

In 1930, the wife's father was expelled from Zhytomyr to Alma-Ata, where his wife and daughter Rozalia left ... The wife believes that she has no father, mother, brother and sister, and was not interested and is not interested in their fate . Why my wife's father was expelled, neither I nor my wife know, but the wife understands that her father obviously deserved it, and therefore she did not show and does not show any pity

for him ... " Such is the biography . The man is purely modest in his claims (from 17 to 23 he worked as a forester), who grew up in the family of a rural lumpen proletarian. I never gravitated towards military service,

avoided the front of the First World War as best he could. A caring father and a nervous husband - another in his place would quickly divorce the daughter of a repressed Pole. The "stain" in the personal file was washed away by the most diligent cooperation with the punitive authorities. The peak of career growth is three years as division chief of staff. Before and after that - in non-combatant positions from supply manager to head of an infantry school in a provincial outback. Mention of studying at the Military Academy. Frunze should not mislead us - what and how was taught in this "academy" if the students were people with incomplete primary education? In fact, it was a closed, "elite" educational program, in which illiterate "nominees" were pulled up to the level of an average seven-year school with a sin in half.

Everything is relative. In order for the reader to appreciate the biography of the commander of the Southwestern Front, we will give brief information about the commander of the German Army Group South, Field Marshal Rundstedt.

He was 17 years older than Kirponos, born in 1875 in the family of a general in the Prussian army. He graduated from military education in Oranienstein, in 1893 he was promoted to lieutenant. In 1907 he graduated from the Military Academy. During World War I, he was an officer of the General Staff, then chief of staff of the 53rd Army Corps on the Eastern Front, and by the end of the war, chief of staff of the 15th Corps in France. For military merit and personal courage, he was awarded the Knight's Crosses of the 1st and 2nd classes and the Order of the House of Hohenzollern. After the defeat of Germany, he remained to serve in the Reichswehr. At the end of 1932, Rundstedt was appointed commander of the 1st Army Group in Berlin. In November 1938, he resigned due to the fact that he spoke out against the occupation of the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia (I wonder what would have happened to the Soviet general, who, for example, spoke out against the "liberation" of Western

Ukraine?). In May 1939 he returned to serve in the Wehrmacht. During the invasion of Poland, he commanded the Army Group South, which occupied Warsaw. During the French campaign, Rundstedt commanded Army Group A, which broke through the front at Sedan and surrounded

allies at Dunkirk. After the victory in France, he receives the highest military rank in Germany, field marshal general. The

appointment of a commander of this level to the post of commander of one of the three Wehrmacht Army Groups on the Eastern Front looks understandable and logical. But how did the former head of the Kazan Infantry School turn out to be his opponent?

It's all about the war. Finnish. The head of the infantry school was drafted into the army and became the commander of the 70th rifle division. In the last days of the war, the Kirponos division accomplished a feat - terrible, bloody, absolutely meaningless. Under the terms of the peace treaty, the city of Vyborg (Viipuri) was to go to the USSR. Nevertheless, Stalin and Timoshenko ordered, without waiting for the day and hour of the ceasefire, to take the city by storm. The 70th Rifle Division was instructed to bypass the city on the ice of the Gulf of Finland and "cut off the escape routes of the Finnish troops encircled in the city" (and this despite the fact that the order and timing of the withdrawal of Finnish troops at that very time were agreed upon at negotiations in Moscow). Of course, the Finns did not deny themselves the pleasure of teaching the presumptuous aggressor a lesson. The shells of the heavy guns of the coastal batteries broke through huge polynyas, living and dead Red Army soldiers disappeared into the ice.

The division commander Kirponos courageously walked ahead of the attacking chains - in a word, Comrade Stalin could be completely satisfied with the humility of his true ones.

Those who were able to give such pleasure to the leader were showered with awards, titles, and new appointments. Commander of the 1st rank Timoshenko became a marshal and People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, commander of the 7th Army, which stormed the "Mannerheim Line", commander of the 2nd rank Meretskov became an army general and chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. The personal courage shown by Kirponos was not forgotten either - he received the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union and was appointed commander of the 49th Rifle Corps.

This is where Comrade Stalin would have stopped - but no, he really liked the modest and courageous newly minted Major General Kirponos. In June 1940, having jumped several rungs of the career ladder at once, the former head of the Kazan Infantry School was appointed to the post of ... commander of the search for the Leningrad Military District! But even this seemed

few! In February 1941, Stalin appointed G.K. Zhukov to the post of chief of the General Staff, and the vacated office of the commander of the Kiev OVO - the largest military district of the Soviet Union - takes Kirponos on February 22, 1941, who received the third promotion in 9 months in the military rank (he became colonel general). Neither England nor the United States on that day had a land army of such a size as the one that was to be led by a company paramedic of the First World War, recognized already in 1920 as fit only for non-combatant. "And woe to the troops entrusted to him..."

The command of the front, which now (on the morning of June 27) had to demonstrate to the Headquarters its readiness to *"not give rest to the aggressor for a day"*, did not give the 8th mechanized corps a single day for a calm regrouping and deployment to new starting lines. And the corps really needed it.

First, both the direction and the depth of the upcoming offensive have changed significantly. True, the change was reasonable: from Brody to Dubno there is a highway, parallel to it - an embankment of the railway, the area is open, convenient for the advance of tanks. But on this road, the tank divisions of the corps still had to get out of the forest near Leshniuv - Khotyn. The distance from Brody to Dubno is 62 km along the highway, and such a "task of the day" was hardly realistic for the mechanized corps, parts of which, as a result of leapfrog orders from the front command, were scattered for tens of kilometers.

The 12th Panzer Division carried out the nightly withdrawal order surprisingly quickly; in a number of cases, the withdrawal of troops turned into a disorderly flight. The decomposition in the division reached the point that the commander of the division, General Mishanin, who was heavily shell-shocked during the bombing, was simply dragged into an abandoned tank and left alone in Brody, under the "supervision" of the same shell-shocked orderly [105]. In the report of the corps commander we read:

"... At the time of receiving the order from the Southwestern Front, the 12th Panzer Division was on the move from Brody to Lodkamen, its column was stretched to a depth of 20-25 km. The delegate of the headquarters of the corps immediately turned half of the column of combat vehicles of the 12th Panzer Division and consisted of 25 heavy and medium

vehicles as an advanced detachment was sent at 10.00 on 27.6.41 in the direction of Kozin, Verba, Dubno with the task of capturing

Dubno Following the specified detachment at 14.00 on 27.6.41, the 34th Panzer Division was introduced (150-156 tanks, motorized rifle and artillery regiments) with the task of capturing the Dubno area by the

end of the day Following the 34th Panzer Division at 17.00 on 27.6.41, units of the 23rd and 24th tank regiments of the 12th tank division (up to 30 tanks) in the area of cape Verba for joint operations with the 34th tank division. By the end of June 27, 1941, these units linked up with the 34th Panzer

*Division. The remaining units of the 12th Panzer Division during 27.6.41 were in the Podkamin area, where they put themselves in order and **by the end of the day** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) concentrated in the forests northeast of Brody ... " [28,*

*p. 168]. Thus, on June 27, the corps was torn (as it became clear a few days later - torn forever) into two parts. The strike group under the command of Corps Commissar Popel, which included the 34th TD and separate groups of tanks from the 12th TD (a total of about 220 tanks and up to 9 thousand personnel), moved along the highway to Dubno. The rest of the formations of the corps (the main forces of the 12th TD, the 7th motorized division, corps units) under the command of Ryabyshev during the day of June 27 concentrated in the Brody area. It is important to note that most of the new types of tanks (about 100 KV and T-34) **ended up in the Ryabyshev group**; the Popel group could have no more than 8 KV tanks from the 34th TD and about 40 T-34 and KV tanks transferred from the*

12th TD. By the evening of June 27, the Popel group, having defeated several scattered units of German troops on the move, reached the southern suburbs of Dubno. In his memoirs, Popel writes:

"... An infantry battalion and a company of enemy tanks defending the village of Granovka were taken by surprise. To the guns, to the tanks, into the trenches, the German soldiers rushed in their underpants - sunbathing. Volkov dealt with the enemy barrier so quickly that the main forces did not even have to slow down ... Our motorcyclists walked the entire width of the highway. To the right of them, over the railway

moving tanks with guns facing left. When I saw this overflowing avalanche from a hillock, I experienced that special joy that the consciousness of one's own strength gives ... "

On the morning of June 28, the Popel group met with units of the 111th Wehrmacht Infantry Division, which took up defensive positions in the suburbs of Dubno. During a tense battle, Soviet tankers advanced another 10 km and occupied the village of Maly Sady on the southern outskirts of Dubno. It was not possible to enter the city itself (although in the report of the headquarters of the South-Western Front, sent at 22.00 on June 28 to the General Staff of the Red Army, it was said that "according to 14.00 on 28.6.41, the 8th mechanized corps occupies Dubno ") [29, p. 44]. In any case, the most important road junction through which the supply of the 1st tank group of the Wehrmacht went was paralyzed, and in the rear of those who had gone east from the border of the river. Ikva of the German divisions, a powerful tank formation of the Soviet troops appeared.

TWO COMMISSIONERS

On the previous pages of this book, there were many (too many, as some reader may say) criticisms of the Red Army of the 1941 model. It's time to remember that the enemy was exceptionally strong and not a single army in the world could cope with him at that time. The strength of the Wehrmacht was, of course, not in the "multiple numerical superiority", which was not even in sight, and even more so not in the "technical superiority" of the skinny German tanks.

The strength was in something else: in the common confidence for everyone - from the general to the private - in their invincibility, in their superiority over any enemy, in the uncompromising firmness of the command and the stamina of the troops. We have to admit that the breakthrough of the Soviet tank wedge in the rear of the main strike force of the Wehrmacht did not cause even a shadow of confusion among the German generals. **The panicked cry: "We are surrounded" did not come out.** On the afternoon of June 28, *F. Halder*, Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces,

coolly writes in his diary: *divisions. We must hope that in this way he is going towards his death ...* "Three of the four tank divisions of the 1st TGr of the Wehrmacht continued their steady advance to the East.

Having escaped from the trap near Dubno, on June 27, the 11th TD captured Ostrog, crossed the Goryn River and moved along the highway to Shepetovka, the most important railway junction of the Left-Bank Ukraine. The divisions of the 3rd tank corps of the Wehrmacht (13th and 14th tank corps, 25th motorized), developing the offensive from Dubno to the northeast, occupied Rovno by the end of the day on June 28 and the next day reached the Goryn River in the strip Gosha - Tuchin (see Map No. 5). We have to admit that the German command found the

most correct decision, exactly corresponding to the situation: the German tank divisions escaped the inevitable defeat by FLIGHT.

Yes exactly. There was no tank battle near Dubno (similar to the battle of Prokhorovka in June 1943). The German tanks "ran away from the battlefield" - only they did **not run back, but forward, to the east**, into the deep rear of the Southwestern Front. And in order to localize the breakthrough of Soviet tanks near Dubno, the German command hastily pulled four infantry divisions (111, 44, 75, 57) from other sectors of the front, as well as part of the forces of the 16th tank and 16th motorized divisions from the 48th tank corps. In parentheses, we note that the very fact of the appearance of German infantry 120 km from the border already on the fifth or sixth day of the war clearly indicates what the "fierce resistance" of the Soviet troops actually was. For infantry on foot, 20 km a day is the pace of the march, and the march is forced. It is noteworthy that in October 1939, precisely in these places, on the territory of occupied Eastern Poland, just such a (20 km per day) schedule for the movement of marching columns was established for the withdrawal of German and Soviet troops to the agreed line of the new border [1, p. 130]. There would simply be no time for the German infantry to fight and overcome the "fierce resistance" at such a pace ... Of course, if the Wehrmacht had been confronted in June 1941 by an organized, controlled, able and willing to fight army, then such a decision of the command would have

led the German troops to Ukraine to death. The infantry thrown under the tanks would have been defeated, and the tank units cut off from the supply lines would have driven themselves into a trap in which they were to die without fuel and ammunition. But the German generals already understood (or intuitively felt) with whom they were dealing. The panic that seized the troops and command of the Southwestern Front after the breakthrough of the advanced German units on Ostrog turned out to be the most effective weapon, much more powerful than the small-caliber guns of the German

tanks...

First of all, the command of Yu-3. f. obtained consent from the Headquarters to use units of the 16th Army of General Lukin to parry the German strike, which in the first days of the war arrived from the Far East in the Proskurov (Khmelnitsky) - Izyaslav - Shepetovka region. Yes, the German invasion confused all pre-war plans, and already on June 26, 1941, the 16th Army was ordered to be transferred to the Western

front to Smolensk, but thanks to the energetic and decisive actions of the commander Lukin, the 109th motorized division and the 114th tank regiment of the 57th separate tank division were removed from loading and advanced to Ostrog. Then Lukin attached the 213th motorized division of the 19th mechanized corps to his group, which, as the attentive reader remembers, due to the lack of vehicles, moved on foot from Kazatin to the west, to Rovno, already occupied by the Germans. In general, Lukin's group was at least twice as large as the opposing 11th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht.

In addition, most of the front aviation was also involved in the fight against the German tanks that had broken through to Ostrog, which (according to the report of the Yu-3 Air Force Headquarters. f.) In just one day, June 28, carried out 400 sorties in the Ostrog area — Mizoch [152, p. 200]. 400 sorties, 400 bombing strikes on a column of one division in one day - this already fully corresponds to the phrases constantly present in the reports of the commanders of the Red Army that "enemy aircraft is constantly hanging in the air, chasing even individual machines ..."

In the August report of the commander of the Yu-3 Air Force. f. it is stated that the aviation of the front *"during the period 28.6-29.6. the enemy's tank group (up to a division) was driven back by the actions of our bombers in cooperation with the troops of the Shepetovsky fortified area from Ostrog and dispersed in the sands"* [29, p. 118]. It pushed back and dispersed... True, according to German data, the irretrievable losses of the 11th TD, even by

September 4, amounted to only 40 tanks [10, p. 206]. In addition, the command of Yu-3. f. ordered the creation of a "cut-off defensive line" along the line Ishneveti - Bazalia - Starokonstantinov, i.e. 60-70 km south of the route of the German 11th TD. The last reserves of the front were advanced to this line: the 24th mechanized corps (222 light tanks), three artillery anti-tank brigades and the 199th rifle division.) these formations stood at the indicated line without any contact with the enemy, who was not at all going to turn south, but rushed straight to the east, into the deep rear of the Southwestern Front.

In addition (as Bagramyan writes in his memoirs), (the headquarters decided - presumably, on the basis of panic reports that flew from the headquarters of the Yu-3. f. to Moscow, that the front, on its own, "did *not*

will be able to hold back an avalanche of fascist tanks ” (by the beginning of the fighting in the 11th TD there were only 143 tanks). On June 29, Zhukov, in a telephone conversation with Kirponos, emphasized that “The Headquarters requires the main attention to be paid to the development of events in the Shepetov direction ... To do this, Lukin’s tank units in full force (13th and 17th tank divisions, 115th TP 57- th Panzer Division, at least 900 tanks. - M.S.) to throw on Zdolbunov - Mizoch” [110]. The German command, which was hardly desperately bluffing, throwing the rather battered 11th Panzer Division into a "dashing cavalry raid" on the rear of the Soviet troops, itself counted on such an effect ...

For all this turmoil, the 8th and 15th mechanized corps, most likely, were simply forgotten. However, about what happened there, it’s better not to recall.

After all the confusion with the change of orders, after many days of throwing in the forest region of Radekhov - Brody - Buek, on the morning of June 28, the 15th MK went on the offensive. By that time, enemy tanks had already left Berestechko far to the east, and the 15th mechanized corps, moving in the direction of Buek - Lopatin, could only meet with individual units of the 297th and 262nd Wehrmacht infantry divisions (see Map No. 6).

The June 28 battle report in the final report of the 15th MK commander is preceded by a long list of reasons why an armored fist strike, in which there were still more than **three hundred tanks**, was "doomed to defeat." In particular: “... Location. In the offensive zone of the

corps to Berestechko - 5 serious water barriers: r. Radostavka, r. Ostrówka, r. Zhechka, r. Loshuvka and r. Sokolowka. All rivers have swampy banks and are hard-to-reach frontiers for tank operations. The entire terrain in the offensive zone is wooded and swampy, the commanding heights are on the side of the enemy. Conclusion: the terrain is not conducive to the offensive ... ” There is no need to argue with such a conclusion. It

remains only to ask the question - on what terrain did the divisions of the 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht advance? How were they able to overcome these mighty forest streams (Radostavka, Ostruvka, Zhechka, Loshuvka and Sokoluvka), as well as the Western Bug, Styr, Goryn, Sluch, and then the Dnieper, not marked on any geographical map? And where did they come from in the swampy forest

"commanding heights", and why did they end up in the hands of the enemy, who appeared in this forest only a few days (or even hours) ago?

However, signing such a report, the commander of the 15th mechanized corps only followed in the "general channel" of complaints about the terrain and the opposing enemy, as had already been set by the higher authorities. So, as early as July 3, 1941, the head of the Armored Directorate of the South-Western Front, in a report addressed to the head of the Main ABTU of the Red Army, explained the *"huge losses and the incapacity of the remaining materiel"* by the fact that the mechanized corps had to operate in "almost tank-inaccessible wooded swampy areas", in conditions of *"stubborn resistance from the prevailing (???) enemy and the absence of armor-piercing shells for the KV and T-34"* [28, p. 134]. The last remark is undeniably true. But who was supposed to take care that at least a small part of the 132 thousand armor-piercing 76-mm rounds available in the warehouses of the Red Army was delivered to the military district that received tanks armed with a 76-mm cannon (KV and T-34), more than all the other districts put together? How could the head of the ABTU of the Kyiv OVO eat, drink, sleep, perform marital and official duties, knowing that there were no armor-piercing shells in the tank divisions entrusted to him? Or did he only find out about it on July 3rd? The descriptions of the battle on June 28, contained in

the reports of the commanders of the 15th MK, 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions, are very lengthy, confusing and contradictory. The shortest summary looks something like this:

"... During the day, the units fought for the capture of Lopatin ... the advancing units of the 10th TD were detained in front of peat bogs, in the area of \u200b\u200bwhich the only road turned out to be completely unsuitable for crossing tanks ... During the battle for Lopatin at the turn of the river . Ostrovka, the advancing units were surrounded (the tank division was surrounded by enemy infantry. - M.S.). Staying the 10th TD in this area for the night, being surrounded, was pointless (???) and could lead to the loss of the entire division ...

... Having suffered significant losses and not having sufficient tank support (???), the motorized rifle regiment of the 37th TD was forced to suspend the offensive and go on the defensive on the west coast

R. Styr ... Due to a temporary loss of control, the 73rd tank regiment of the 37th TD with great difficulty managed to be transported to the western bank of the river. Styr... This made it possible for the remnants of the enemy battalion, which was defending the crossings at Stanislavchik (an infantry battalion against a tank division. - M.S.), to withdraw into the forest... An attempt to cross over the bridges over the river. The ostrovka was unsuccessful, since the lead 2-3 tanks that approached the bridge were instantly knocked out and caught fire. Several tanks tried to go around the bridge on the right and left, but this proved impossible; tanks got stuck in a swamp and were hit by enemy artillery fire ... From such a situation, it was clear that it would be pointless to continue attacks without artillery, infantry and aviation, in turn, to remain at the reached line on the southern bank of the river. Ostrówka was

also risky... ...At nightfall, the commander of the 15th mechanized corps ordered the withdrawal of units of the 10th Panzer Division to the east in the area of the 37th TD, and later, in connection with what had already happened (? ??) exit from the battle of the 37th Panzer Division - an order to exit the battle and

return to its original position ... "It's hard to believe that all this happened on its own territory, in the area of \u200b\u200bthe permanent pre-war deployment of the 15th mechanized corps, t .e. where every road, path, ditch, ford, bridge had to be thoroughly studied. It is hard to believe that we have a description of the combat operations of the mechanized corps, which included pontoon-bridge, sapper, engineering, repair evacuation, reconnaissance units. For each tank in the 15th MK there were (as of June 1, 1941) 45 personnel. Of these 45 people, there were at most five members of the KV crew inside the tank (three people in the BT). All the rest would have to provide tankers with reconnaissance, repairs, fuel, shells, bridges, crossings and, most importantly, control ... In the battle on June 28, along with the 15th mechanized corps, the 8th

tank division of the 4th mechanized corps also operated . The 8th Panzer was almost fully equipped, the "old" personnel division. A notable feature of the 8th TD was the presence of 68 three-tower T-28 tanks in its arsenal, which made this division formidable.

enemy for the German infantry. However, the main weapons of the division were not exotic three-tower tanks, but 50 KV and 140 T-34s. In terms of the number of new tanks (190 units), the 8th TD surpassed the entire 15th (or 8th) mechanized corps. L is how N.K. The popel of the commander of this tank division:

"I look at him and admire him - nature spared nothing for this man: neither beauty, nor intelligence, nor courage, nor charm ... Red Army soldiers tell legends about his exploits in Spain and Finland ... Commanders on the fly catch his every word. .."

By the time the 8th TD finally crawled to the initial offensive area, there was one consolidated tank regiment left from the entire division, armed with **65 (sixty-five)** tanks [29. p. 260]. The report on the combat operations of the 15th MK noted that *"thanks to the active actions of the 8th tank division, the left flank of the corps was secured from the west and the 10th and 37th tank divisions were able to retreat to the line of the river. Radostavka"*. This is not a typo. The result of the *"active actions"* of the tank division in the offensive is that the other two tank divisions were able to safely retreat with its help, pursued by the enemy infantry. Although this achievement is by no means indisputable. So, in the report on the hostilities of the 10th TD we read something exactly the opposite: *"The division's withdrawal routes were cut off by enemy tanks and infantry, since the 8th TD (neighbor on the left), which had the task of covering the division's actions from the west, could not move through heavily fortified anti-tank area"* [28, p. 197]. This is strange. The sixth day of the war - and the Germans in the depths of Soviet territory already have an anti-tank area ready, and even "heavily fortified" ...

The main forces of the 8th mechanized corps, despite the presence of a powerful tank ram (besides two hundred light tanks in the 12th TD, there were still about 100 KV and T-34), could not break through the defenses of the 75th Infantry Division and the motorized infantry units of the 16th German Panzer Division. The perseverance and stamina of the German soldiers were stronger than steel armor. A German historian

describes the battle with Soviet tanks south of Dubno as follows :

destruction of tanks. The wind carried smoke and fumes around. One heavy infantry gun (short-barreled 150 mm cannon - M.S.) managed to knock out two medium tanks. 50-mm anti-tank guns were useless even at a distance of 400 m. More and more steel colossi entered Tarnovka, but the soldiers of the 16th Panzer Division held their own with dignity. One 88-mm anti-aircraft gun destroyed 4 tanks within half an hour.

When the attack was repulsed, the dead and wounded were picked up and the smoke dissipated, 22 wrecked tanks could be counted on the

battlefield ... " [193]. Ryabyshev's group never succeeded in advancing beyond the Kozin-Verba line. Meanwhile, the Germans returned the tank units of the 16th Panzer Division from Kremenets to the battle area, pulled up the motorized infantry of the 16th Motorized Division. The 57th Infantry Division entered the rear of the Ryabyshev group and practically without a fight occupied the city of Brody (which was supposedly defended by the 212th Motorized Division of the 15th Mechanized Corps). By the evening of June 28, the formations of the 8th mechanized corps were surrounded. The panic started again. General Mishanin died, on foot raising the fighters to attack. In his report on the

combat operations of the corps, Ryabyshev writes: "... Parts of the 7th motorized rifle division broke through from the encirclement in different directions. Having lost a large number of tanks, artillery and vehicles, by 24.00 on 28.6.41 the division left the encirclement and concentrated southeast of Brody"

Popel's memoirs give a much more vivid picture of what was hidden behind the mean phrase "breaking through from the encirclement in different directions": "...

*Ryabyshev got into the emka and rushed to Brody. On the way, he came across fighters wandering in crowds, burning cars, **wounded lying in cuvettes** (emphasis added by me. - M.S). Nobody occupied the line intended for the 12th Panzer Division ... Some restless Red Army soldiers said that the motorized infantry had rolled south, apparently towards Ternopil. The corps commander turned onto the southern highway and caught up with the tail of the stretched column about twenty kilometers away. Nobody knew anything. Ryabyshev tried to stop the cars. From the cockpit of the lorry, a sleepy voice calmly said:*

- What else is there commander? Our general is a traitor. Leaked to the fascists. Ryabyshev

jerked the cockpit handle, grabbed the speaker by the harness (ordinary soldiers drive without a harness. - M.S.), dragged him out. - I'm your commander.

Without putting his pistol in his holster, Ryabyshev moved along the column, stopping companies, battalions, ordering them to occupy the defense with the front to the north-west ... " [105].

After the disorderly withdrawal of the remnants of the 8th mechanized corps to Brody - Podkamen, the Popel group was doomed: the tank group, deprived of communications and supplies, was surrounded more and more densely by units of five German divisions. Two rifle divisions (140th and 146th) of the 36th SC were at a distance of 15-20 km from Dubno, but, contrary to the order of the front commander No. 0018 of June 28, they did not provide any support to the Popel group. A convoy of vehicles with fuel and ammunition for Popel's group was stopped on the Brody-Dubno highway. It was stopped by the commander of some retreating cavalry division who happened to be there (most likely it was the 3rd cavalry division from the 6th army) and sent back, since "Dubno has long been with the Germans." Nobody wanted to argue with this, the trucks turned around and hurriedly left for the rear ...

Most likely, another, personal tragedy is connected with the tragic story of the death of the 8th mechanized corps - the suicide of a member of the Military Council of the South-Western Front N.N. Vashugin. It is difficult (if not impossible) to reconstruct an accurate picture of events. Let's start with an excerpt from the memoirs of N.S. Khrushchev, who was both a witness to the suicide and a direct participant in the events (as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Khrushchev was a member of the Military

Council of the Front): "... I want to *highlight an unpleasant episode for us that happened to a member of the Military*

Council of the Kiev OVO. When we had difficult conditions in the Brody area, the commander of the troops and I took measures to regroup the troops and clarify the direction of our strike against the enemy troops who were advancing on Brody. In order for this order to be received in time by the commander of the mechanized corps Ryabyshev and the commander of another corps,

whose name I forgot (judging by the previous description, we are talking about the 15th MK. - M.S.), we decided to send a member of the Military Council of the KOVO so that he himself handed over the orders, which outlined the direction of the strike. Before leaving for the mechanized corps, he went in the evening to me...

A member of the Military Council (Khrushchev stubbornly does not call Vashugin by his last name. - M.S.) left for the troops, and returned early in the morning and again came to me. He looked terribly agitated, something incredibly excited him.

He came at a moment when there was no one in the room, everyone left, and told me that he decided to shoot himself.

I say: "Well, what are you? Why are you talking such nonsense?" "It's my fault that I gave the wrong instructions to the commanders mechanized corps. I don't want to live." I continue:

"Let me, how is it? Did you give orders?" "Yes, I did." "So after all, the orders say

how they should act and use

mechanized corps. What are you doing here?"

"No, I then gave them verbal instructions that contradict these orders." I

say: "You had no right to do this. But even if you gave such instructions, all the same, the corps commanders did not have the right to be guided by them, but must follow the instructions that are set out in the orders and signed by the front commander and all members of the Military Council. Other instructions are not valid for corps commanders." "No, I'm there..." In a word, I see that he is starting an argument with me, without any arguments, and he himself is in

some kind of shock. I thought that if this person is not persuaded, but dealt with more strictly, then this will bring him out of the state of shock, he will gain inner strength and return to normal. So I say: "What are you talking nonsense? If you decide to shoot, why are you delaying? I just wanted to restrain him with a certain harshness of words, so that he would feel that he was acting criminally towards himself. And he suddenly pulls out a pistol (the two of us were standing in front of each other), brings it to his temple, shoots and

falls ... He was loaded into a car and sent to the hospital, but there he soon died ...

...I can't determine his state of mind right now. Clearly, he was nervous. Then he came to me and shot himself. However, before that, he talked to people who were in direct contact with him, and they heard his words. He believed that everything was lost, we were retreating, everything was going on, as happened in France. "We are dead!" - these are his true words ... Then I wrote a cipher to Stalin, described our conversation. There is a document that I am now reproducing from memory. I think I speak exactly, except perhaps for the order of presentation. I describe the very essence, as it was then in life..." [31, pp. 306-307]. Khrushchev

does not indicate the exact date of this gloomy event; there are no specific details in his memoirs that would make it possible to clarify the time of the action. There is only a report that Vashugin left in the evening, and returned to the front headquarters "early in the morning." This is an important detail, but, unfortunately, not very reliable - Khrushchev, over the years, could have made a mistake in such details. Most importantly, there is no decoding of the content of the "other instructions" that Vashugin allegedly gave to the commanders of the mechanized corps. Alas, the most important thing for the historian has

been replaced by an ellipsis ("*no, I'm there ...*") In the memoirs of Bagramyan, Ryabyshev, Popel (and on their basis, in many historical and artistic works), it is stated that Vashugin went to the 8th mechanized corps on the morning of June 27 (twenty-seventh) in order to speed up the start of the offensive on Dubno. Accordingly, the excessive fervor of the commissar explains the fact that the corps began the offensive hastily, in separate, disparate parts. This scene is most vividly described by Popel (or, more likely, by his "lit-consultants"):

"... Car doors slammed. More and more new faces appeared before us - colonels, lieutenant colonels. I recognized some - the prosecutor, the chairman of the Military Tribunal ... Soldiers jumped out of the back of a lorry that closed the column. The one

to whom the corps commander addressed did not listen to the report, did not raise his hand to his temple. He walked, crushing the shrubbery with his polished boots, straight towards Ryabyshev. When I approached

He looked up into the wrinkled high-cheeked face of the corps commander and asked in a voice choked with rage: "How much did you sell for, Judas?"

Ryabyshev stood at attention in front of a member of the Military Council, taken aback, not finding what to say, and we all looked at the short, well-built corps commissar in bewilderment. Dmitri Ivanovich spoke first: - You would listen, comrade of the corps ... - You, traitor, the field court will listen. Here, under the pine

let's listen and shoot at the pine tree...

I could not stand it and stepped forward: - Not yet known; what considerations are guided by those who, by order, force us to give up the territory taken by force to the enemy. A subtle

confusion: - Who

ordered you to give up the territory? What are you grinding? Dmitry Ivanovich reports. A member of the Military Council steps in front of us with his hands behind his back, looks at his watch and orders Dmitry Ivanovich: "Report to me about your decision in twenty minutes ... The corps commissar did not give time either for reconnaissance or for regrouping divisions. What to attack? Ryabyshev gets up and goes to the corps commissar walking alone.

"The Corps won't be able to finish regrouping until tomorrow morning. Indignantly, a

member of the Military Council says almost in a whisper: "A decision will be made in twenty minutes - and forward ... "Despite the undoubted artistic merits, this text is not very reliable psychologically. It is not clear what caused such

a wild fury of Vashugin ("for how much he sold ... you, a traitor, the field court will listen ..."). A member of the Military Council of the front (and who was constantly at the headquarters of the front) could not be unaware of the order to withdraw, received by the mechanized corps in the early morning of June 27. So the phrase "Who ordered you to give up the territory!" looks completely ridiculous. Vashugin was a regular military man (and not at all a party functionary, who received a commissar position only a few weeks before the war and

rank), respectively, he could not help but understand that tanks do not fly through the air and it is impossible to turn the mechanized corps in a couple of hours. Of course, there could be claims that Ryabyshev was not acting as quickly as we would like - but this is not yet a reason for accusations of treason. Finally, "fast" and "slow" are relative terms. If we recall the pace at which the 8th Panzer Division was moving towards the battlefield, then Ryabyshev's corps deserved rather encouragement for the masterful organization of forced marches ...

From psychological nuances, let us now move on to the dry prose of documents. Here we are in for even more surprises. There is no mention of Vashugin's visit in the reports of the commanders of the 8th and 15th mechanized corps (while the fact of the arrival of Major General Panyukhov with an order to withdraw, and then Brigadier Commissar Mikhailov with an order to advance, specifically, indicating hours and minutes, noted in the documents of the 8th MK and the 15th MK). Further, Ryabyshev gave the order to **immediately launch an offensive against Dubno** at

7 (seven) in the morning, without waiting for the arrival of a high-ranking "driver". In his "Report on the combat operations of the corps" we read: "... *In accordance with the order of the South-Western Front No. 2121, the corps commander at 7.00 27.6. , m. Willow,*

Dubno by the end of June 27, 41, go to the Dubno region ...

12th Panzer Division with a strike in the direction of Sitno, Kozin, m.

Willow by the end of June 27, 1941, go to the Podluzhe area, m. Verba, Sudobice.

The 7th motorized rifle division, moving in the direction of Brody, Chervonoarmeysk, Cape Verba, by the end of 27.6.41, concentrate in the area (claim.) Cape Verba, Rudnya, Bereg ... Beginning of the offensive

at 9.00 on 27.6.41. It is noteworthy that in his post-war memoirs, Ryabyshev draws a completely different picture of events: "... I came to the conclusion that it is possible to start executing a new

*order **only in a day** (emphasis added by me. - M.S.) ... Connections and parts of the corps they had to pass the starting line for the offensive at 2 am on June 28, and at 4 o'clock start the attack ... Preparations were carried out in accordance with the decision ... However*

the rapidly changing situation did not allow systematically solving the issues of organizing hostilities. On the afternoon of June 26 (this is an obvious typo - either by Ryabyshev, or by "litconsultants", or by a publisher, because "on the afternoon of June 26" the 8th mechanized corps advanced on Leshnev-Khotin, and there was still no talk of two orders and an attack on Dubno - M.S.) Corps Commissar N.N., a member of the Military Council of the Front, arrived in the corps. Vashugin and on behalf of the commander demanded to immediately begin to carry out the assigned task ... " [113].

Nevertheless, the event (Vashugin's meeting with the commander of the 8th MK), which, without saying a word, four participants in the events (Khrushchev, Bagramyan, Ryabyshev, Popel) write about, most likely happened in reality. As a working hypothesis, we can assume that it happened not on June 27, but on June 28 (twenty-eighth), 1941. In this case, many things "fall into place". On the

night of June 27-28 (to be absolutely precise, at 4.00 on June 28) at Yu-3 headquarters. f. Combat Order No. 0018 was issued [29, pp. 37-38]. Not only was this order written in the most decisive terms and set the task of attacking both the mechanized and rifle corps of the front - in order No. 0018, for the first time, specific **instructions** appeared on where **the headquarters of the corps should be located by the end of the day on June 28!** Both the form and the content of the order indicated that the patience of the front command had come to an end, and it demanded that the commanders subordinate to it personally lead the offensive. So, the headquarters of the 15th MK by the end of the day on June 28 was supposed to move to Berestechko, the headquarters of the 36th SC - to Dubno, the headquarters of the 5th CC - to Kozin. The 8th mechanized corps was ordered to *"secure the border of the river. Ikva, attack mechanized enemy units operating east of the river. Ikva in the direction of Ostrog. After destroying the enemy, by the end of the day, concentrate in Zdolbuniv, Mizoch, Ozhenin. The headquarters of the corps is Ozhenin (a village and a railway station on the Goryn River, 15 km north of Ostrog. - M.S.) "*. (See Map #5). In other words, the 8th mechanized corps, which actually just started the battle for Dubno, was supposed to force the river during the day. Ikva and advance 40-50

km to Ostrog. Under order No. 0018 is Vashugin's signature - and this is **the last** (!) Order signed by him. Given that Order No. 0018 set very decisive (if not adventurous)

tasks, then a personal trip to the troops of a member of the Military Council (i.e., chief commissar) of the front becomes quite understandable. It also becomes clear that Vashugin's psychological reaction to what he saw when he found himself at the location of the 8th mechanized corps in the morning of June 28 (twenty-eighth) the death of their comrades (the Popel group), already surrounded by the southern suburbs of Dubno. Something incredible passed before the eyes of Commissar Vashugin: randomly wandering crowds of former Red Army soldiers, hundreds of tanks and guns abandoned on the side of the road, wounded left in roadside ditches ... Probably, then the thoughts and feelings of this man, who sincerely believed in the party, Stalin and "the indestructible power of the Workers -Peasant Red Army", formed into one short phrase: "*I do not want to live ...* "

ROUTE

On the morning of June 29, the 15th mechanized corps was "withdrawn to the front reserve", which practically meant a non-stop retreat to the Dnieper. The situation of those days is eloquently evidenced by a short phrase in the report on the hostilities of the 15th MK: "... *The highway east of Zolochiv is full of burning cars of countless columns ...*"

The report of the commander of the 15th MK states that during the day of the "fierce" battle on June 28, the 10th TD lost seven people: 1 was killed and 6 people were wounded. Here one would be glad that by the end of June 1941 the Red Army had learned to fight with "little bloodshed". Alas, further in the reports such figures appear that completely discourage any desire to rejoice at anything. So, during the battles of June 23-28 and the subsequent retreat beyond the Dnieper, the 10th tank lost 210 people killed, 587 wounded and 3353 people "missing", "lagging behind on the march", etc. However, even in terms of the level of losses the division of General Ogurtsov confirmed its reputation as one of the best. After all, 756 senior officers, 1052 junior commanders, 3445 privates went to Piryatin (beyond the Dnieper), in total - 56% of the initial (on June 22) number. The further fate of Sergei Yakovlevich Ogurtsov himself was tragic. During fierce battles near Berdichev, he was captured, in April 1942 he escaped from captivity, joined a detachment of Polish partisans and died on October 28, 1942 in a battle near the town of Tomaszow, 100 km from the same Lublin, to which his tank division

did not reach ... The 37th tank division, whose entire participation in the "counterattack of the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front" was reduced to helpless attempts to push the German infantry battalion from the crossing near the town of Stanislavchik, lost 75% of its personnel. 467 senior officers, 423 junior commanders and 1533 privates entered the concentration area near Piryat-on. Simply put, during the retreat to the Dnieper, the division almost completely "melted".

Well, the 212th motorized division of the 15th MK completely disappeared. Almost without a trace. If in all the reports of the commanders of the 15th MK it is stated that the 212th MD "defended Brody", then Ryabyshev and Popel in their memoirs unanimously say that none of our

they did not find any troops in Brody at all. Already on July 1, during the beginning of the general withdrawal of units of the 15th mechanized corps, the division commander, Major General Baranov, and the chief of staff, Colonel Pershakov, disappeared. In fact, S.V. Baranov was wounded, captured and died of typhus in a prisoner of war camp near Zamosc in February 1942. After the loss of command, the 212th MD quickly and completely collapsed - only 745 went to Piryatin by July 12

Human...

On the same days (June 27-29) began a non-stop withdrawal of units and formations of the 4th mechanized corps, which had been away from the main events all this time. The operational report of the headquarters of the 6th Army of June 27 reads verbatim:

"... The 4th mechanized corps, having made a night march from the Sudovaya Cherry region, from 6 o'clock began to concentrate in the forest area north of Obroshyn (withdrawal 40 km to the suburbs of Lvov. - M.S) ... In front of the front of the corps 26.6.41 in the city, enemy units numbering up to a battalion operated (an infantry battalion against a mechanized corps. - M.S). No enemy was found in the Mostisk area. The corps did not accept the battle ... " [29, p. 197].

With each passing day, the rate of withdrawal was continuously increasing: on June 29, the 4th MK left Lvov, on July 3 the corps was already in Zbarazh (135 km east of Lvov), on the morning of July 9 the 4th MK found the 4th MK near the town of Ivanopol (180 km from Zbarazh). Finally, on July 12, the remnants of the 4th MK passed along the Kyiv bridges across the Dnieper and concentrated in the Priluki area (120 km east of the Dnieper, 650 km from the border). In fact, there was no longer a single and controlled mechanized corps, since simultaneously with the withdrawal of the main forces beyond the Dnieper, individual units of the 4th MK continued to wage stubborn battles in the area of \u200b\u200bBerdichev

and Kazatin - much west of the Dnieper ... Incredibly, but for all this, the commander of the 4th Mechanized corps Vlasov had nothing. That is, then, of course, they hanged him - but for something completely different. And in the summer of 1941, he even went on promotion and became commander of the 37th Army. Comparing Vlasov's career with the tragic fate of the command of the Western Front, who was shot without exception (the commander of the 14th SI mechanized corps wounded in battle. Oborin was taken directly from the hospital for reprisal), v

Stalin was truly a great man. Not everyone can understand the logic of his executions and favors... For

lovers of conspiracy theories, we will give a "decoding" of several more names and positions. The commander of the 6th Army, Muzychenko, surrendered on August 6, 1941 in the "boiler" near Uman, where the remnants of the 6th Army were defeated. The head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 6th army, Meandrov, surrendered, became one of the founders and leaders of the Vlasov "army", was hanged in 1946. The chief of staff of the 6th rifle corps of the 6th army, Major General Richter, surrendered, actively collaborated with by German special services (according to some reports, he headed the Warsaw reconnaissance and sabotage school of the Abwehr), shot in August 1945. The neighbor of the 4th mechanized corps on the right was the 27th rifle corps. The corps commander, Major General Artemenko, surrendered, was shot in June 1950, and rehabilitated in June 1957. The neighbor on the left is the 13th Rifle Corps. The corps commander, Major General Kirillov, surrendered, was shot in August 1950, and rehabilitated in 1957.

And at this time, in an atmosphere of general chaos and the uncontrolled withdrawal of the troops of the Southwestern Front, the commander of the 5th Army, Major General M.I. Potapov was preparing a new offensive. According to the plan of the commander, the 9th mechanized corps of Rokossovsky and the 19th mechanized corps of Feklenko, together with parts of the 15th rifle corps, were to go on the offensive from the line of the Goryn River to Mlynov (see Map No. 5). After heavy fighting, these mech corps, already initially the "weak link" of the tank forces of the Southwestern Front, were the remnants of tank formations. So, in the 9th MK there were only 32 tanks, in the 43rd tank division of Tsibin (19th MK) 60 T-26 tanks and one "thirty-four" remained in service. The strength of the 135th Rifle Division assigned to reinforce the mechanized corps dropped to 1,511 during the week of fighting [92].

The main striking force of the new (and, as it turned out, the last) counteroffensive of the troops of the Southwestern Front was to be the 41st Panzer Division of the 22nd Mechanized Corps. The attentive reader, I hope, still remembers how this division in the first days of the war rushed between Vladimir-Volynsky and Kovel, how it was "taken apart piece by piece", as when retreating through the dense forests of Ukrainian Polissya, the division

lost most of their tanks. But everything comes to an end - and in the last days of June, the remnants of the 41st Panzer and 215th Motorized Divisions joined up with the main forces of the 5th Army. According to Vladimirsky's monograph, by June 29, 41 TD had 106 T-26 tanks and 16 heavy K-yaV-2 tanks; another 15 T-26 light tanks, recruited along the retreat roads, ended up in the 215th motorized division (initially, its tank regiment was armed only with BT tanks). The artillery of the 15th Rifle Corps was also very powerful, which (not counting one and a half hundred divisional guns of caliber from 45 to 107 mm) consisted of 60 howitzers of 122 mm caliber and 67 howitzers of 152 mm caliber (which, in terms of the weight of the total volley, is three times greater than the firepower full infantry division of the Wehrmacht). The idea of a

counterattack promised success. But that was not the

case... *"When the troops of the left wing of the 5th Army were finishing their preparations for going over to the offensive," writes Vladimirsky, "a new order was received from Commander Yu-3. f., in which the 5th Army was tasked with starting a withdrawal at nightfall on July 1 and retreating to the line of the Sluch River by the morning of July 5 ... Due to the tight deadlines for withdrawal, offensive operations had to be*

completed no later than the evening of July 1 "[92] . It is impossible not to note the constancy with which the command of Yu-3. f. disrupted any organized offensive actions of the troops entrusted to him. Nevertheless, on July 1 at 15.00 the offensive began. By 10 pm on July 1, the tankers of the 41st TD, having defeated up to three batachions of German motorized infantry, were already 15 km from Dubno. If the attack of the 41st Panzer Division had been coordinated in time and place with the actions of the Popel group, then, most likely, several thousand fighters and several dozen tanks could have been withdrawn from the encirclement. Alas, once again there was no interaction between the groupings of Soviet

troops, located at a distance of fifty kilometers from each other. Meanwhile, the enemy, very worried about the activity of the 5th Army, brought into battle the reserve of the commander of Army Group South. On the morning of July 2, the 99th Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht and the motorized division of the SS "Adolf Hitler", urgently deployed through Lutsk, s

German divisions, our divisions bled dry by previous battles, could not, and the order of the front headquarters demanded the speedy withdrawal of units from the battle. On the evening of July 2, all formations of the 5th Army began to withdraw to the line of the Sluch River ...

At noon on June 30, after parts of the 4th, 15th and 8th mechanized corps rolled back from Lvov and Brod to Ternopil, the German divisions surrounding Dubno from all sides began an offensive. Like a pack of dogs on a hunted bear, three infantry (111, 44, 75), the 16th tank and 16th motorized divisions of the Wehrmacht rushed to Popel's group. The Germans used the two-day pause given to them by the sluggishness of the Soviet command - they brought up large artillery forces, accumulated large stocks of shells.

The offensive began after a powerful two-hour artillery preparation. Popel recalls: *"Our advanced positions disappeared in smoke and dust. The clouds covered the sun... The boundary between the field and the forest disappeared, the road disappeared, the horizon disappeared..."* [105]. There was almost nothing to answer - in the artillery regiment of the 34th TD there were only a few shells left.

But the "bear" was still very strong. Heavy tanks KB, having shot all the ammunition, rammed German tanks, trampled enemy cannons into the Ukrainian black soil. During the battle, it was possible to capture several German howitzer batteries with a large supply of shells, which immediately fell on the head of the enemy.

By the end of the day, the fighting had died down. The Germans did not advance a kilometer, suffered heavy losses. But the situation of the Popel group also became critical: fuel and ammunition were running out, all radio stations were broken, first-aid posts were overflowing with the wounded. Late in the evening of June 30, after much deliberation, the commanders made the following decision: the tankers left without combat vehicles (and they didn't even have pints), the medical battalion, the rear services, under the cover of one tank regiment, break through the encirclement at Cape Verba at night and go south, to Ternopil. This group was led by Colonel Pleshakov, commander of the 27th motorized rifle regiment. Only a few shells were placed in each of the sixty tanks of this group - the main hope was for the effect of surprise, for a swift onslaught and tank ramming. This calculation was justified. The Germans, arrogant to the point of recklessness, were asleep. Pleshakov's detachment practically without a fight

went east. About a week later, on the Ternopil-Proskurov highway, the detachment caught up with units of the 8th MK retreating to the east.

The main forces of Popel's group (which by this moment had been reduced to 80 tanks and several batteries of artillery) on the morning of July 1 made their last attempt to break through along the Dubno-Brody highway to the south-west, where, according to Popel's overly optimistic assumption, Ryabyshev should have been with two divisions of the 8th mechanized corps. The lack of communication and information once again played a fatal role in making such a decision. There were no longer any of our troops in the Brod area.

What can we tell about this fight, if its eyewitness, participant and leader writes:

"... Separate episodes, scenes arise in the shroud of bloody fog. No matter how much I want to, I can't consistently describe this incomparable carnage that lasted all day... The lush grass around turned yellow from smoke... An unceasing roar fills the air, rolls through the forest. You can't make out where our tanks are, where the fascist ones are. There are black steel boxes all around, from which pokes of flame burst out..." [105]. The commander of the 34th Panzer

Division, Colonel I.V., was killed. Vasiliev, the commissar of the division M.M. Nemtsev and the commander of the 24th tank regiment of the 12th TD lieutenant colonel P.I. Volkov; Thousands of fighters and commanders were killed, went missing, ended up in German captivity. At sunset on July 1, survivors gathered in the forest near the village of Kozin - about one thousand people.

"I ordered the formation of personnel," N.K. writes in his memoirs. Popel. *"People have seen enough of everything that day. They would not have been surprised if a German regiment had risen from behind the bushes to attack. But build? Why is this needed? Has the brigadier commissar lost his mind?"* No, Commissioner Popel was right. Without a doubt, it was this attitude: "we are part of the regular army, with its Charter, discipline, banner" - saved people from shame and death in captivity. Attaching groups of encirclement from other units, the detachment fought 250 kilometers along the huge Dubno-Slavuta-Korosten arc and at the end of July 1941 went to the location of the 5th Army units in the Belokorovich area.

TANK CASE

This is how the "tank battle" in Western Ukraine, the biggest battle of the first weeks of the war, ended in complete defeat and rout. It must be assumed that only after the Germans collected and counted all the tanks, armored vehicles, howitzers, motorcycles abandoned on the roadsides, they realized - WHAT threatened them ...

The modern historian is in a more difficult position. Those tanks no longer exist - what was not melted down in the open-hearth furnaces of Germany, after the end of the war was melted down at the factories of the Urals and Zaporozhye. It is impossible to determine exactly and unconditionally the reason why each of the five thousand tanks of the Southwestern Front was lost. Nevertheless, even the few available documents allow us to formulate a well-reasoned hypothesis about the causes of the unprecedented defeat. Since

the history of the defeat of **the 15th mechanized corps is best documented**, we will begin the study of the phenomenal "death" of tanks from it, which engulfed the troops of the Southwestern Front at the end of June 1941. The corps had two tank divisions: the 10th and 37th. The losses of the 10th TD in the battle on June 23 and in subsequent skirmishes with the enemy are described in detail, for each day and battle, in the reports of the division commander and corps commander [28, pp. 193-213 and 29, pp. 253-275]. As for the 37th TD, until June 28, it had no combat contact with the enemy - as well as losses from enemy aircraft - at all. Let's summarize all the known information in two

10-я тд	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего
Было в дивизии по состоянию на 22 июня	63	38	51	181	30	363
Из них исправны и вышли в поход	63	37	44	147	27	318
Боевые потери 22—26 июня	13	6	0	32	2 (?)	53
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	10	5	4	20	0	39
???	40	26	40	95	25	226

37-я тд	КВ	Т-34	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего
Было в дивизии по состоянию на 22 июня	1	34	258	23	316
Оставлено в г. Кременец	1	0	15	10	26
Боевые потери 22—26 июня	0	0	0	0	0
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	0	29	185	7	221
???		5	58	6	69

So, the most powerful in the 15th MK (and one of the best in terms of staffing and training of personnel in the entire Red Army), the 10th Panzer Division, in five days turned into a pretty battered tank battalion!

Of the 318 serviceable tanks as of June 22, by the end of the day on June 26, only 39 remained in service. **Losses of "unknown origin" amounted to 226 tanks. For five days.** Even if we assume that the report of the division commander misses some

combat losses during episodic skirmishes with German infantry units, this inaccuracy does not explain the discrepancy between the number of combat (53 tanks) and total (279 tanks) losses. Particularly impressive are the dynamics and structure of the losses of the three-turret T-28s, which quietly disappear, probably without having time to fire a single shot at the enemy. If the report is to be believed, the 48-ton KVs with their 75mm armour, are in no way superior in terms of combat survivability to the light BT-7s and T-26s with bulletproof armor, which is strange to say the least. The most surprising thing is that neither in the report of the acting division commander, nor in the report of the acting corps commander, these egregious facts are even commented on! In the 37th

Panzer Division until June 28, things were going well. better. 221 tanks (out of 316) are ready to fight.

Another 26 tanks are waiting in the wings at the place of permanent deployment of the division in Kremenets. Three-quarters of the total number of "hopelessly outdated" BT-7s successfully withstood many days of stupid throwing along forest roads and, judging by the report of the division commander, are still in good order. It is not known where "only" 69 tanks disappeared.

The losses of tanks of the 10th Panzer Division in the battle on June 28 are specified specifically: 1 KV, 1 T-34, 7 BT-7. On the morning of June 29, the 15th mechanized corps was withdrawn to the "front reserve", which meant a non-stop retreat to the Dnieper. The state of the tank fleet of the 15th mechanized corps as of July 6-8 was as follows:

10-я тд	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	10	5	4	20	0	39
Боевые потери 28 июня	1	1	0	7	0	9
Фактическое наличие к 6 июля	2	3	1	12	2 (?)	20

At the time of signing the report, the acting commander of the 10th Panzer Division had no tanks in the division. No one. This is directly indicated in the text of the report [28, p. 211]. There is also a table in the report with

"deciphering" the reasons for the loss of tanks. The first thing that catches your eye is a huge "range" of reasons. Instead of a clear and precise classification: -

lost from enemy impact (hit), - lost without enemy
impact for technical reasons (broken), - abandoned, the report's
compilers came up with
10 ornate
types of reasons: 1) broken and burned on the battlefield ; 2)
*failed during the performance of a
combat mission and remained in the territory occupied by the enemy;*
3) *did not return with crews from the
battlefield after the attack;* 4) *burned down as a result
of the bombing (we note right away that there is exactly ONE BT-7 tank
in this category);* 5) *left with the crews
surrounded by the enemy due to technical malfunctions or lack of fuel
and lubricants;* 6) *remained due to the lack of fuel and
lubricants and the inability to submit it,
because the area is captured by the enemy;*
7) *went missing with the crews;* 8)
*destroyed at the collection points of emergency vehicles due to the
impossibility of evacuation during withdrawal;*
9) *left during the withdrawal due to technical malfunctions and
inability to recover and evacuate;*
10) *stuck on obstacles with the inability to remove and
evacuate.*

Only paragraphs 1 and 4 clearly refer to losses from enemy impact. The specific meaning of paragraphs 2 and 3 is unclear. If the tank "did not burn out as a result of the bombing" (p. 4) and was not "broken and burned down on the battlefield" (p. 1), then for what other reason did it "not return with crews from the battlefield after the attack"? After all, a tank is not a long-range bomber that flew behind enemy lines and no one has ever seen it again ... But how should paragraph 2 be understood? Strictly speaking, starting from the morning of June 22, ANY losses of tanks can be summed up under the category "failed in the performance of a combat mission", and after a rapid (on some days of July - 150-200 km per day) retreat to the east, without exception, all the tanks remained "in territory occupied by the enemy." We should not forget that this report was written at the end of July 1941, for hun

kilometers from the place of events, in conditions that completely excluded the possibility of inspecting the lost vehicles and **verifying the reliability of the stated reasons** for the disappearance of three hundred

tanks ... Probably, in order for the statistics of losses to acquire at least some intelligible meaning, it is necessary to combine paragraphs 1 and 4 ("combat losses"), paragraphs 2 and 3 ("presumably combat losses"), paragraphs 4-10 ("without enemy influence"). In this case, the following picture emerges:

10-я тд	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего
Исправны и вышли в поход 22 июня	63	37	44	147	27	318
Боевые потери	11	20	4	54	7	96
Предположи- тельно боевые	11	4	4	5	5	29
Без воздействия противника	34	8	36	41	12	131
???	7	5	0	47	3	62

So, two-thirds of the tanks, which were in good working order on the evening of June 22, were lost without enemy action.

In particular, 41 impenetrable HF out of 63 available. And, finally, to explain the reasons for the loss of 62 tanks (and this is a tank brigade in the states of autumn 1941), none of the 10 crafty formulations came up. The compilers of the

report simply and briefly kept silent about them. The tanks of the 37th Panzer Division almost completely disappeared during the retreat. Stanislavchik has no exact data on tank losses in a single battle, but judging by the above description of the battle, the division lost no more than 10-20 tanks. After that, the number of tanks was reduced from two hundred to 14 for "unknown reasons." In general, 80% of the tanks of the 37th TD were lost no one knows where and how.

37-я тд	Т-34	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего:
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	29	185	7	221
Боевые потери 28 июня				20 (?)
Фактическое наличие к 6—8 июля	2	12	0	14
???	27	173	7	187

The most powerful in terms of the number of tanks (including the latest KV and T-34) on the Southwestern Front was the **4th mechanized corps**. The corps included two tank divisions:

the 8th and 32nd. In the first two days of the war, the 8th TD, together with the entire 4th MK, rushed around the Yavorov-Nemirov region, where 19 T-34 tanks were lost during skirmishes with German infantry. Nothing was said about the loss of other types of tanks in the report of the division commander, but the division entered the operational subordination of the commander of the 15th MK, having 65 tanks in service. Where were the remaining 240 tanks of one of the most powerful tank divisions of the Red Army at that moment? During the battle on June 28 in the Toporuv-Lopatin area, the 8th Panzer Division lost 12 tanks. After that, there was a retreat and the participation of a group of tanks of the 8th TD in a multi-day battle near Berdichev. The commander of the 8th TD, Colonel Pyotr Semenovitch Fotchenkov, died in August 1941 in the Uman "cauldron". By that time, the division as a tank formation had long ceased to exist. But there remained a report compiled by the commander of the 8th TD, which contains a detailed and detailed answer to the questions posed above. An outstanding feature of this report is the direct and explicit use of the term "abandoned" (for this reason, 107 tanks were lost). For ease of perception, let's summarize all the data in one table [152, p. 246]:

	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7 и Т-26	Всего
Исходное кол-во на 22.06.1941 г.	50	140	68	67	325
Подбито	13	54	10	8	85
Брошены, пропали без вести, прочие	25	49	27	28	129
Отправлены на завод, отработали моточасы	8	32		8	48
Завязли в болотах	2	2		2	6
Арифметический остаток	2	3	31	21	57

So, the main component of tank losses in one of the best divisions of the Red Army was: “abandoned”, “missing”, “stuck in a swamp”, mysterious “other”. The balance of 57 tanks exists, alas, arithmetically, but not practically. So, judging by the reports of the Armored Directorate of the South-Western Front from July 15-17, the 8th TD has only 32 tanks, and among them there are not 31, not even one T-28. Against the background of such “order in tank units”, the reliability of information about combat losses raises serious doubts: 13 KV and 54 T-34s, practically invulnerable to 37-mm German anti-tank guns, were allegedly hit, but at the same time tanks with bulletproof armor and gasoline engines (T-28, BT and T-26) were hit almost four times less! The situation with the loss of tanks in the

32nd Panzer Division of the 4th Mechanized Corps was similar. There is a detailed report of the commander of the 32nd TD, Colonel E.G. Pushkin on the combat operations of the division [28, pp. 181-192]. Summing up the losses suffered by the division during the battles with the German infantry from 23 to 29 June, gives a figure of 23 tanks. Another 11 tanks lost two tank battalions, which on the evening of June 22 were advanced to the Radekhov area, where on the afternoon of June 23 there was a battle with units of the 11th German Panzer Division. Total

amounted to 34 tanks. After these battles, the retreat across the Dnieper began, during which the 32nd Panzer Division had separate skirmishes with the forward detachments of the German motorized units pursuing it. The specific number of losses in these skirmishes was named in the report of Colonel

Pushkin only once: *"... 10.7.41, the group of tanks of Captain Karpov (10 tanks and 2 armored vehicles) concentrated in the Beizymovka area and at 20 o'clock attacked the enemy in the direction of Olshanka, but, not supported by infantry, withdrew at 23:00 and took up defensive positions 300-400 m south of Olshanka. During the next day, the group fought an unbearable battle in the same area and, as a result of the flight from the front of the 32nd motorized rifle regiment, was destroyed and left on the battlefield,*

*with the exception of one tank ... "[28, p. 185]. So, **43 tanks** "by name" were lost in battle. It can be assumed that some figure comparable to the one named was not reflected in the description of the division's combat operations. However, in the "Consolidated Statement of the Material Part" attached to the report, there are completely different loss figures. A total of **269 tanks were lost** (37 KV, 146 T-34, 2*

However, even these phenomenal numbers of losses of impenetrable tanks do not coincide with the cash balance. Simple arithmetic shows that even after the loss of 37 KV, 12 more such tanks should have remained in the 32nd TD. But in the report "On the condition and availability of the material part of the mechanized corps of the front" signed on July 15, 1941 by the head of the ABTU of the South-Western Front, it is said that only 6 tanks remained in the entire 4th MK

(and not in the 32nd TD alone!) KV [29, p. 89]. The fact that most of the losses of tanks were not related to the impact of the enemy is also evidenced by the ratio of losses of personnel and military equipment. So, according to the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, the 63rd tank regiment of this division in the period from June 22 to July 30, 1941 lost 17 people killed and 63 wounded. At the same time, 145 armored vehicles were lost (14 KV, 61 T-34, 42 T-26, 19 T-37, 9 BA-10) [28, p. 190]. To understand these figures, it should be remembered that the personnel of a tank regiment does not at all consist of tank crews alone, respectively, tankers make up only a part of the number

Documents that allow revealing and detailing the phenomenal "death of tanks" that engulfed the Red Army in the first weeks of the war were declassified more than forty years ago. The copy of the Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War No. 35 that I worked with (and from which most of the information given in previous chapters is taken) has a blue stamp: "Declassified. Directive of the General Staff No. 203995 dated November 30, 1965.

However, in our country, declassifying and making available is not the same thing at all. To the so-called "general public", these documents are unknown (and, frankly, inaccessible) to this day. But what is interesting is that the so-called Soviet "historians" began to prepare in advance for the moment when the awl would nevertheless come out of the bag. In hundreds of books and articles, they have already managed to announce to the "city and the world" that Soviet tanks were extremely unreliable, primitive, worn out, with depleted motor resources ... That's why they crumbled on the go in the very first days of the war ...

To unfortunately, I'm not kidding. For four decades, publications claiming to be scientifically fundamental have been replicating the myth that "by the beginning of the war, three-quarters of the tanks needed repair," and either 29% or 44% were in "overhaul". It's sad, but even the compilers of such an authoritative statistical study as "Secrecy Removed" did not hesitate to tell readers that out of 14.2 thousand Soviet tanks that were in the army on June 22, 1941, "there were 3.8 thousand fully combat-ready units" [35, p. 345].

From the writings of Soviet "historians" this nonsense was rewritten in the monographs of other Western "researchers" (such as the infamous American Colonel David Glantz) and already as a "first-class imported product" returned to the bookshelves of Russian stores ... At the same time, real

data on technical The state of the tank fleet of the Red Army has been known since at least November 1993 (since the well-known publication of N. Zolotov and S. Isaev "Were Combat Ready" in No. 11 of the Military History Journal), N. Zolotov and I. Isaev showed and the truly elegant way in which

long-term falsification is built. The fact is that on the basis of the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR No. 15 of January 10, 1940, the division of armored vehicles into the following five categories was provided:

1. New, unused and in good condition

use for its intended purpose.

2. Being in operation, quite serviceable and fit for use for its intended purpose. 3. Requiring repair in the district workshops (medium repair). 4. Requiring repair in central workshops and factories (overhaul). 5. Worthless (tanks of this category were

deregistered and were not included in the summary sheets). I hope the reader has already

guessed how exactly he was fooled: only the 1st category was included in the category of "combat-ready", i.e. absolutely new tanks, and the entire 2nd category was classified as "in need of repair"! This is about the same as recognizing as technically serviceable only cars standing on the podium in the cabin, and declaring all those that drive along the streets "in need of repair" ... The last pre-war "Statement of the availability and technical

condition of combat vehicles as of June 1, 1941" (TsAMO, f. 38, op. 1 1353, d. 924, l. 135-138, d. 909, l. 2-18) indicates that the troops of the five western border districts were in service (not counting obsolete and withdrawn from composition of combat units of tankettes T-27) 12,782 tanks, of which "fit for use for their intended purpose" (1st and 2nd categories were 10,540 tanks - 82.5% of the entire fleet) . In particular, in the Kiev OVO (the future South-Western Front) there were 5465 tanks, of which 4788 units (**87.6%**) were assigned to the 1st and 2nd categories .

These figures, however, do not describe the technical condition of the tanks that were directly in the mechanized corps of the Kyiv OVO. The fact is that there were slightly more tanks in the district than tanks in mechanized corps.

Eight (22, 15, 4, 8, 16, 9, 19, 24th) mechanized corps of the Kiev OVO were armed with "only" 4808 tanks out of a total of 5465. More than six hundred tanks were part of reconnaissance battalions of rifle divisions in tank regiments of cavalry divisions, in training centers,

at repair bases and warehouses. There is every reason to assume that it was the mechanized corps, and not the rifle divisions, that received new (or almost new) tanks, respectively, and the percentage of "fit for use for its intended purpose" in the mechanized corps was even higher than the average for the district .

Now, from the general figures, let's move on to assessing the technical condition of the tanks of the 10th Panzer Division of the 15th Mechanized Corps - the same division, with the story of the phenomenal losses of which we began this chapter. We open again the "Report on the combat activities of the 10th Panzer Division on the front of the fight against German fascism" and there we read: " ... *the KV and T-34 tanks, without exception, were new vehicles and by the time of the hostilities they had worked up*

to 10 hours (were mostly run-in) ... T-28 tanks had an average power reserve of up to 75 hours ... BT-7 tanks

had a power reserve of 40 to 100 hours ... T-26 tanks were mostly in good technical condition and worked only 75 hours..." [28, p. 207].

Now let's move on from "hours" to understandable to every kilometer run. With a very modest (and absurdly low for a high-speed BT tank) cruising speed of 10 km / h, the "pathetic" balance of 75-100 hours turns into 750-1000 kilometers. For a regular bus, which must carry passengers from morning to evening, this is negligible. More than enough for a tank. Tanks don't live that long in war. A major offensive operation on a front-line scale involves an advance of 200-250-300 kilometers. Taking into account the maneuvering inevitable in the conditions of multi-day battles, these figures should be increased by 1.5-2 times, up to 500-600 km. The tanks of the 10th Panzer Division had more than enough motor resources to reach Lublin and Krakow. And more was not required of them. The tank, which "survived" to the end of a large front-line operation, fully justified all the costs of its production and operation. After that, it can be written off with a clear conscience or put on a major overhaul.

And this is by no means abstract theorizing. In reality, in 1943-1945, everything happened exactly like this: "...

In the 3rd Guards Tank Army in the Lvov-Sandomierz operation (summer 1944), the number of repaired tanks and self-propelled guns

*significantly exceeded the number of combat vehicles available in the tank army at the beginning of the operation. In other words, during one operation, each tank (self-propelled gun) **went out of action two or three times** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - M.S.) and the same number of times returned to the combat formations of units and*

formations An analysis of the data on the losses of tank armies in 11 offensive operations allows us to note a number of important points in the problem under consideration.

Firstly, the irretrievable losses of tank armies in an offensive operation lasting an average of 15-20 days amounted to about 25% of the initial number of tanks and self-propelled guns, and the total losses were about 82%.

*Secondly, combat vehicles to be restored accounted for up to 70% of the total losses (that is, 57% of the original number of tanks. - M.S.). Among the vehicles to be restored, there were approximately 70% of tanks and self-propelled guns that failed due to combat damage, and 30% (that is, **only 17% of the original number.** - M.S.) due to jamming and technical malfunctions .. .*

The percentage of tank repairs to the number of tanks and self-propelled guns available at the beginning of the operation ranged from 115% (Belgorod-Kharkov operation, 1st Guards TA) to 221% (Vistula-Oder operation, 2nd Guards

TA) [167, pp. 218-219]. These are excerpts from the monograph "Tank Strike". The author is General of the Army A.I. Radzievsky, head of the Military Academy. Frunze, during the war years - chief of staff of the 2nd Guards Tank Army.

And only the losses of tanks during the so-called "counterattack of the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front" in June 1941 absolutely do not fit into the "normal" framework, confirmed by many years of war experience. Normal (as far as this word is generally applicable to war) is a situation in which the main reason for the failure of tanks is, of course, the impact of the enemy. Technical failures and getting stuck on the ground are about 17% (i.e. less than one-fifth) of the original number

tanks.

*Finally, it can be firmly stated that **neither before the summer of 1941, nor after it**, such a massive "death" of Soviet tanks has ever been*

noted.

"Unreliable"

They turned out to be "faulty", "unrepairable" only in the first weeks of the Soviet-German war. Prior to this, Soviet tanks showed miracles of endurance.

The first episode of the combat use of BT tanks was the war in Spain. On the basis of 50 BT-5 tanks, a tank regiment of the Republican army was formed, which in October 1937 entered the combat area on the river. Ebro, having completed a march of 630 (six hundred and thirty) km (97) in two and a half days. Perhaps the most difficult test of the running capabilities of BT tanks was Khalkhin Gol. At the end of May 1939, two tank brigades (6th and 11th) made an unprecedented 800-kilometer march across the hot Mongolian steppe (the air temperature in those days reached 40 degrees, what was happening inside the steel boxes heated by the sun, you can only guess) in the area of future hostilities. Here is how the Hero of the Soviet Union K.N. describes these events. Abramov, commander of the tank battalion of the 11th brigade: "... For our brigade, the

combat alarm signal sounded on May 28th. We were allotted an hour and a half for alert training, the battalion was ready to move in 55 minutes. An 800-kilometer march across the waterless Mongolian steppe, unprecedented in tension and length, was ahead ... The column moved along a barely noticeable steppe road trodden by camel caravans. In some places the road disappeared - it was covered with sand. To overcome sandy and swampy areas, tanks had to be transferred from wheeled to caterpillar. Well-trained crews performed this work in 30 minutes ... " By the end of the day on May 31, the battalion in full

force reached the designated area. The 6th tank brigade spent a little more time (6 days) on the 800-km march. Six years after the battles at Khalkhin Gol, in August 1945, BT-7 tanks as part of the 6th Guards TA took part in the so-called "Manchurian strategic operation". Tank brigades then covered 820 (eight hundred and twenty) km through the Greater Khingan mountain range with an average march rate of 180 km per day [167]. Of the total number of 1019 tanks of all types, only 78 (seventy eight) units **were lost during the operation !** [35, p. 373]. Old "beteshki" (the most recent of which were

released five years ago) have withstood such a test. Even if we assume that all six years the tanks simply stood on conservation, then in this case their technical condition could only worsen: the rubber hoses were brittle, the seals were "wrung out", the contacts were corroded...

The history of the T-34 tank, as it is written about in all books, began with the fact that in March 1940 the first two experimental tanks traveled **3000 km** on their own along the route Kharkov - Moscow - Minsk - Kiev - Kharkov. We passed in the spring thaw, along country roads (moving along the main highways and even using bridges in the daytime was forbidden for reasons of secrecy). Yes, such a march was not easy for the technique - the discs of the main clutches burned out, chips were found on the teeth of the gears of the gearboxes, the brakes overheated. In the end, the

turnaround time for serial T-34 tanks was not set at 3000 km (namely, such a fantastic figure was provided for by the terms of reference), but "only" at one thousand km. In the cold of January 1943, during the offensive

Operation Don, Soviet tank brigades marched more than 300 km across the snow-covered Zadonsk steppe and defeated the large forces of the German Army Group A, which broke through in the summer of 1942 to the oil-bearing regions of Mozdok and Grozny. In the summer of 1944, during the operation "Bagration" (the defeat of the German Army Group "Center" in Belarus), the 5th Guards TA, advancing off-road, among forests and swamps, covered 900-1300 km at an offensive rate of up to 60 km per day and the total consumption of motor resources in 160-170 hours [167, p. 227]. In May 1945, the tanks of the 3rd and 4th Guards Tank Armies traveled 400 km from Berlin to Prague. Through mountainous wooded areas, in five days, and at the same time - without significant technical losses. The legendary "thirty-four" went through the entire war, in many armies of the world it stood in service until the mid-50s. Captured Soviet tanks and Komsomolets light artillery tractors served in the Finnish army right up to 1961! Without spare parts, without instructions for use, among the Finnish snows and swamps...

However, we can find the most amazing confirmation of the reliability and survivability of Soviet technology by analyzing ... losses

mechanized corps of the Red Army in the summer of 1941. But not the loss of tanks, but **the**

loss of cars. We open once again the report of the commander of the 10th Panzer Division. Before the start of hostilities, the division had 864 serviceable trucks and tankers. Of these, 613 cars came across the Dnieper, to Piryatin. Excellent result! Almost three-quarters of the original number of vehicles traveled at least 500 km (the report gives a figure of as much as 3,000 km) from the border to the Dnieper - and this is on broken pound roads, under enemy air strikes, without repair services and spare parts. Continuing the "mandatory Soviet set" of reasons for the defeat, one would also have to add the phrase about the "lack of fuel and lubricants", but this does not happen in nature, so we have to admit that there

was gasoline for trucks. If out of 864 cars came to Piryatin 613, then there were losses. Arithmetic gives us the figure 251, the report indicates the causes of losses for 293 vehicles. This inconsistency may be, in particular, due to the fact that in addition to trucks, the division also had dozens of cars. But let's not find fault with these insignificant particulars, something else is more important - what were the reasons for the loss of cars?

*"210 vehicles were lost as a result of the battle, 34 vehicles were left with drivers surrounded by the enemy due to technical malfunctions and due to the lack of fuel and lubricants, 2 vehicles were destroyed at the assembly point of emergency vehicles due to the inability to evacuate during the general withdrawal of the unit, 6 cars got stuck on obstacles due to the impossibility of evacuating them, and 41 cars were left during the withdrawal of the unit due to technical malfunctions and the impossibility of restoring them. So, **due to technical malfunctions**, no more than 77 cars were lost - **less than 9%** of the total initial number. This is simply an excellent indicator of technical reliability. What are these ultra-reliable and highly passable cars? The report has an exact answer to this question: 503 GAZ-AA and 297 ZIS-5.*

Gazik GAZ-AA is a former American Ford-A. Simple and cheap, "budget" truck. Simple and cheap for the early 20s, when it was developed and put into production. In the early 40s, it could already be placed in a technical museum. Front

bridge on one spring, and even that across the frame, the rear axle hangs on two stumps - half-springs, a carburetor without an air filter (just a hole for air intake, that's all). At a "mad speed" of 40 km / h, only a deep track could keep this car in a straight line. After two or three trips from the collective farm field to the city elevator, the driver of the "gazik" with a sense of accomplishment put it in for repairs: to tighten the crankshaft babbit bearings, wash the "vacuum cleaner" carburetor, and so on. And this squalor had greater reliability, maneuverability and protection from air attacks than armored tracked vehicles, some of which (BT-7, T-34) could be considered the best tanks in the world in terms of all indicators of mobility?

Is it possible to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of data on the losses of a single division? Of course not, so let's move on. 37th Panzer Division of the same 15th Mechanized Corps. The exact number of vehicles available at the start of hostilities is not indicated either in the report of the division commander or in the report of the acting corps commander. There are only complaints that "the motorized rifle regiment was completely lacking in vehicles." On July 15, 1941, the division concentrated in Piryatin included: "T-34 tanks - 1, BT-7 tanks - 5, BA-10 armored vehicles - 11, wheeled vehicles - 173." One hundred and seventy-three cars. And only 6 tanks out

of 316. We take the report of the commander of the 32nd tank division of the 4th MK. Of the 420 vehicles of all types (passenger cars, trucks, special trucks, tankers), 133 were lost [28, pp. 189-192], 32% of the original number. Let me remind you that 269 out of 323 tanks

were lost. 18th mechanized corps of the Southern Front. Like other formations of the Southern Front, he entered into hostilities and was defeated a few weeks later than the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front. By the end of July, the 18th MK still existed. Only 43 BT tanks and 19 T-26 tanks remained in its arsenal, as well as 100 cars and 1,771 trucks and special vehicles, including 1,230 "ultra-reliable" GAZ-AA. The 2nd

Mechanized Corps of the Southern Front lasted the longest. As of August 1, the corps had 136 tanks (26% of

initial number) and 3294 vehicles (87% of the initial number) [152, pp. 412, 415]. Now let's move on to the most generalized data. Why again turn to the most official source -

the statistical collection repeatedly mentioned above "The classification has been removed." The compilers of this work did a good job. Fourteen pages list the losses of weapons and military equipment by years of war. Tanks - separately, guns - separately, 122-mm howitzers separately from 152-mm howitzers, etc. In the second half of 1941, the percentage of losses is monstrously high: 73% of tanks, 70% of anti-tank guns, 65% of heavy machine guns, 61% mortars... And cars lost only 33% of the total [35, pp. 352-363]. How can this be? Primitive gas trucks and ZISs slightly superior to them turned out to be many times more reliable than tanks? More reliable than armored vehicles created on the basis of the same ZISs? Plywood cabins turned out to be stronger than steel armored hulls? And was there gasoline for a timely departure from the territory occupied by the enemy? A car is not a horse, and certainly not a Red Army soldier - no matter how hard you "press on consciousness", it won't even move without

fuel ... But maybe we just don't understand something important? Maybe there is some kind of law of war unknown to amateurs, according to which the combat survivability of plywood vehicles is higher than the survivability of armored tanks? These doubts haunted me until I opened Reinhardt's well-known monograph "Turn near Moscow" [171, p. 381]. At the end of the book of the "beaten Hitler general" there is a plate with the numbers of losses of weapons and military equipment (including cars) of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front in 1941. And the last doubts disappeared. Miracles do not happen - the loss of cars **in the warring army** is ten times greater than the losses

tanks:

	танки	автомобили	k=
Красная Армия	20 500	159 тыс.	8
Вермахт	2 831	116 тыс.	41

The difference in numbers is striking. We are not yet discussing the question of why the losses of the retreating Red Army are greater than the losses of the advancing Wehrmacht. Many "objective" reasons can be found or invented for this. But in the Wehrmacht, there are 41 vehicles per lost tank, and in the Red Army - only 8. And this is all - on average for the second half of the 41st year. If we consider the structure of losses of the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front for the first three weeks of the war (while the tanks were still available), then there the number of lost vehicles and tanks is almost equal, or even more tanks were lost in absolute numbers than cars! And

everything is very simple. Wehrmacht fought. Yes, he fought for the sake of plundering foreign land, fulfilling the criminal will of the inhuman regime. But the German army fought, and therefore, above all, it took care of its tanks. From the very first hours of the war, the Red Army turned into a crowd of armed refugees, for whom the antediluvian "gas trucks" were much more valuable than the newest, best tanks in the world ...

Part H

BARREL AND HOOPS

ARITHMETIC OF HISTORY

On September 17, 1939, the troops of the Belarusian and Ukrainian fronts of the Red Army invaded Poland. Thus, with a perfidious attack on the country with which the Non-Aggression Treaty was signed (concluded in 1932, extended in 1937 until 1945), the Soviet Union began its direct participation in World War II. Two years later, at the end of the summer of 1941, it seemed to many friends and enemies of the Soviet Union that this war was coming to an end for it.

The task assigned to the Wehrmacht according to the Barbarossa plan (*"the main forces of the Russian ground forces located in Western Russia must be destroyed in bold operations by deep, rapid advancement of tank wedges ..."*) was completed by mid-July 1941. The troops of the Baltic and Western military districts (more than 70 divisions) were defeated, driven back 350-450 km east of the border, scattered through the forests

or taken prisoner.

A little later, the same thing happened with the new 60 divisions introduced into the Northwestern and Western fronts in the period from June 22 to July 9. The enemy occupied Lithuania, Latvia, almost all of Belarus, crossed the Bug, Neman, Western Dvina, Berezina and Dnieper. July 9, the Germans occupied Pskov, July 16 - Smolensk. Two-thirds of the distance from the western border to Leningrad and Moscow was covered in less than a month. The troops of the South-Western Front in disorder retreated beyond the line of the old Soviet-Polish border, in mid-July 1941, the Wehrmacht tank units occupied Zhitomir and Berdichev, went to the suburbs of Kyiv. What Soviet historians modestly called "the failure of the frontier battle"

meant in fact the complete defeat of the First Strategic Echelon of the Red Army (the number of divisions surpassed any army in Europe, and the number of tanks surpassed them all combined). Almost all the equipment and heavy weapons of the troops of the western districts were lost. By July 6-9, the troops of the Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern Fronts had lost **11,700 tanks, 19,000 guns and mortars, and more than 1 million small arms** [35, p. 368]. especially heavy,

almost irreparable losses were suffered by tank troops. Already on July 15, 1941, the remnants of the mechanized corps were officially disbanded.

The troops of the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts in the period from June 22 to July 6-9 lost 749 thousand people killed, wounded and missing [35, pp. 162-164]. This figure does not include the loss of those units and formations of the Second Strategic Echelon that took part in the hostilities already in early July; does not include the losses of the Northern Front (Leningrad MD) and the Southern Front (Odessa MD), which began active hostilities on June 29 and July 2, respectively, 1941. The true significance of these horrific figures

can only be understood by comparing them with the losses of Wehrmacht personnel. The famous "War Diary" of the Chief of Staff of the German Ground Forces F. Halder gives the following figures for the total losses (killed, wounded, missing) of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front: - 64,132 people by July 6, 1941 - 92,120 **people** by **July 13 1941**. Thus, the losses of the advancing - and very successfully,

20-30 km per day of the advancing - Wehrmacht and the defending Red Army correlate approximately as **1 to 10**. The figures characterizing the ratio of losses of military equipment are no less eloquent. As noted above, by July 9, the Red Army had lost **11.7 thousand tanks**, and the irretrievable losses of Wehrmacht tank divisions by the end of July 1941 amounted to only **503 tanks**. To this figure should be added the loss of 21 StuG-III "assault guns". You can add on the loss of 92 Pz-I tankettes. Even with this approach, the ratio of irretrievable losses of tanks of the parties is **1 to 19**.

This is a "miracle" that does not fit into any canons of military science. According to sound logic - and throughout the practice of wars and armed conflicts - the losses of the attacker should be greater than the losses of the defender. The loss ratio of 1 to 10 is possible only in the case when the white colonialists, who sailed to Africa with cannons and guns, attack the natives, defending themselves with spears and hoes. But in the summer of 1941, the situation on the western borders of the USSR was completely different: the defending side was not inferior to the enemy either in numbers or in armament, significantly superior to him in the means of delivering a powerful counterattack - tanks and aircraft, and even

and had the opportunity to build its defense on a system of powerful natural barriers and long-term defensive structures. By July 10-15, 1941, the Germans occupied (more precisely, passed) an area of 700 thousand square meters. km, which is about **3 times** the territory of Poland occupied by the Wehrmacht in September 1939, and 6 times the territory of Belgium, the Netherlands and a patch of northern France captured by the Wehrmacht in May 1940.

On comparing the events of May 40th and June 41st, it is probably worth dwelling in a little more detail. For decades, Soviet historical propaganda spread rumors about the "triumphal march" that the Wehrmacht supposedly passed through "defeated France." Recently, the sounds of this "march" are louder and more often heard from the pages of the latest publications. This is understandable - after the scale of the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army became known to the general public, the authors of a certain political orientation had a great desire to depict the defeat of the French army in the brightest colors. We will once again turn to simple and boring school subjects: arithmetic and geography.

The fighting in May 1940 took place on the "patch" of Normandy and Flanders, with maximum distances of 300 km along the front and 350 km in depth. In terms of area, this territory approximately corresponds to the size of Lithuania, which **one of the three**, the smallest, Army Group North **occupied in one week** of June 1941. Wehrmacht's advanced tank formations reached the banks of the English Channel in the Boulogne-Calais area on May 23, 1940. This there was, of course, a brilliant success - in 14 days of the offensive, the German tank divisions covered 350 km. Everything is relative. In order to determine where the

German tank divisions were located on the 14th day of the "campaign to the East", let us turn again to the diary of F. Halder. In the assessments and conclusions, the "beaten Hitler general" was often and very mistaken, but the location of his troops was the chief of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht

still knew:

"July 5, 1941, the 14th day of the war

Situation: Progress is noted in all sectors of the front

according to plans...

On the front of Army Group Center, the right wing of Guderian's tank group held a foothold on the river. Dnieper in the Rogachev area (450 km to the nearest point on the border. - M.S.) ... In addition to Drissa, the Goth tank group also crossed the Western Dvina above Polotsk in the Ulla region (425 km from the border. - M.S.) and entrenched itself on the northern bank of the river ... On the front of Army Group North, Panzer Group Göpner is successfully advancing and approaching with its left flank to Ostrov (470

km from the border) on July 7, the 16th day of the war ... At the front of Army Group South our troops broke through the central section of the enemy defensive line. The 11th Panzer Division broke through eastern Polonnoye (260 km) and is now making its way to Berdichev Division among the columns of retreating troops. The 16th Panzer is in the Russian Starokonstantinov (250 km). The 9th Panzer Division is currently participating in a large tank battle in the Proskurov area (280 km) ...

"So if we talk about the pace of the "march", then in the summer of 41st the Wehrmacht advanced somewhat faster and on a much larger front than in May 1940. Now let's look at the situation in the first weeks of the war from the other side. What losses did the Wehrmacht inflict during the so-called "triumphal march" in France and overcoming the "fierce resistance" of the Red Army on the Eastern Front? The

well-known monograph by Tippelskirch gives the following figures for the losses of the Wehrmacht in the French campaign: 27 thousand killed, 18.4 thousand missing, 111 thousand wounded, total - **156 thousand** people [127]. According to updated data presented in the equally textbook-famous work of Müller-Gillebrand, the death toll was 49 thousand people [11], which is even slightly more than the total number of irretrievable losses indicated by Tippelskirch.

In the diary of F. Halder, comparable figures for the total losses of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front appear **only at the end of July 1941**. If we translate Halder's data into a more familiar form for us (combining the losses of soldiers and officers), we get the following: - 102,588 people (not counting sick) by July 16, 1941 - 179,500 people by the end of July (entry dated August 2). - 213,301 people by July 31 (entry dated August 4).

At the end of July 1941, the Wehrmacht advanced on a gigantic front from Narva to Chisinau (1,450 km in a straight line), behind the attackers there was already a territory ten times larger than the battle zone of the French campaign. With this in mind, it would hardly be appropriate to compare German losses according to a simple "calendar principle": 35-40 days in the West and 40 days in the East.

Much more correct will be a comparison built on the principle of "price-result". According to the chronology generally accepted in Russian historiography, the "border battle", i.e. the defeat of the troops of the western border districts (Baltic, Western and Kyiv) is limited to June 22 - July 9. Already at this stage, the result achieved by the German troops (the number of defeated enemy troops, the depth of the offensive, the captured trophies) exceeded all the military (not to be confused with political) achievements of the French campaign. The losses of the Wehrmacht by this moment, as noted above, left about 65-90 thousand people, i.e. were **1.5-2 times less than** the losses of the "triumphal march" on the Western Front! The ratio of losses of German tanks also deserves attention [10, 36].

	Pz-II	Pz-35/38 (t)	Pz-III	Pz-IV	Pz.Bef	Bcero
Потери во Франции (май—июнь 1940 г.)	240	99	135	97	69	640
Восточный фронт (к концу июля 1941 г.)	97	140	153	96	17	503
Восточный фронт (к 4—10 сентября 1941 г.)	152	231	252	125	38	798

Particularly impressive are the almost equal losses of medium German tanks (Pz-III and Pz-IV) on the Western and Eastern fronts - and this despite the fact that the main weapon of the French anti-tank gun was the 25-mm "Marianne" of the Hotchkiss company, and the anti-tank weapons of the Red Army started with 45-mm guns in rifle divisions and ended with 76-mm and 85-mm guns in PTABs. We did not take into account the loss of Pz-I machine-gun tankettes here. Firstly, because it is not a tank, and secondly, because their huge losses in France (182 units) will make the ratio of losses even more surreal. A

comparison of the losses suffered by German aviation during the May (1940) battles in the skies of France and the summer of 1941 on the Eastern Front leads to similar conclusions. During the first three weeks of the war on the Western Front (from May 10 to May 31, 1940), the irretrievable losses of the Luftwaffe (aircraft of all types) amounted to **978 aircraft**. During the first three weeks of the war on the Eastern Front (from June 22 to July 12, 1941), the irretrievable losses of the Luftwaffe (aircraft of all types) amounted, according to various sources, **from 473 to 550 aircraft**. Two times less than in the sky of France. In general, during the entire campaign in the West (from May 10 to June 24), the Luftwaffe lost 1,401 aircraft on the Western Front irretrievably, and another 672 were damaged. For a comparable period of time (from June 22 to August 2, 1941), German aviation losses on the Eastern Front amounted to **968** downed and 606 damaged aircraft (the

maximum known figures are given). Thus, the losses of the Luftwaffe on the Western Front were - in any of the considered time intervals - higher than on the Eastern Front. It remains only to add that the maximum number of fighter pilots of French aviation and units of the British Air Force based in France was about 700-750 people by May 10, 1940, and as part of the fighter units of the Air Force of the western military districts of the USSR, the Air Force of the Black Sea and Baltic fleets to the beginning. During the war, there were about 3,500 fighter pilots (there were much more fighter aircraft, since aviation was re-equipped with new types of aircraft, and in some fighter aviation regiments there were 1.5-2 times more aircraft than pilots).

For all that, the May battles in France are by no means an example of a successful defensive operation. None of the French politicians, historians, writers have yet guessed to call this disgrace "the great patriotic war of the French people." On the contrary, the words "May 1940" became for France a synonym for catastrophe and the greatest national humiliation. *"The shocked nation was in a daze, the army did not believe in anything and did not hope for anything, and the state machine was spinning in an atmosphere of complete chaos,"* Charles de Gaulle describes May 1940 in his memoirs. Churchill recalls how on the morning of May 15, 1940, he was awakened by a telephone call - the head of the French government, P. Reynaud, at the beginning of the sixth day of the war, was in a hurry to tell him that "everything was lost ...". And those losses that the French, English, Belgian, Dutch soldiers were able to inflict then on the enemy, but the minimum minimum that turned out to be achievable under the conditions of general chaos, panic and paralysis of the will of the country's top leadership ...

In mid-July 1941, after the brilliant success of the first operations, the German command had to learn that the surrounded and defeated armies of the western military districts of the USSR were only part of the " *main forces of the Russian ground forces.*" And in place of the broken divisions from the depths of the vast country came her new, new and new units. In concrete terms, this cycle of death looked like this. By the beginning of the war, the Western Front (3rd, 10th, 4th, 13th armies) consisted of **44 divisions**. After almost all of them were destroyed in a huge "cauldron" between Bialystok and Minsk, the Stavka creates in fact a new Western Front consisting of five armies: 16th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd. Following this, on July 14, the Reserve Front was deployed in the rear of the Western Front, consisting of six armies: 24th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd. By the end of July, three more armies are being deployed in the western direction: the 33rd, 43rd and 49th.

The reason why the Red Army rapidly increased its numbers in volumes completely inaccessible to the enemy is extremely simple. The number of divisions that the Wehrmacht was able to concentrate on the borders of the Soviet Union represented the maximum that Germany of 80 million could achieve in the second year after the start of general mobilization. On the other hand, one and a half

the hundreds of divisions of the First Strategic Echelon that the Red Army had concentrated on the western borders by mid-June 1941 represented the minimum that the 200 million Soviet Union could form in the framework of covert, secret mobilization, even BEFORE the announcement of open general mobilization. On June 23, 1941, open mobilization began, and by July 1, **5.3 million people** were drafted into the ranks of the Armed Forces (which meant a **doubling of** the total number of military personnel compared to June 22). But on July 1, the mobilization, of course, did not end. She has just begun...

In total, during the two-month battle of Smolensk in the western direction, **104 divisions and 33 brigades were put into battle**. In two other strategic directions (Leningrad and Kiev), the Stavka sends **140 divisions and 50 brigades** [21]. And all this countless army was defeated, surrounded and captured in new "cauldrons" - near Smolensk and Roslavl, Uman and Kyiv, Vyazma and Bryansk. The Germans captured Kyiv, Kharkov and Odessa, blockaded Leningrad, went to Moscow.

By the end of September 1941, the Red Army had lost **15,500 tanks, 66,900 guns and mortars, and 3.8 million small arms** in the course of seven major strategic operations alone [35, p. 368]. By the end of July, aviation losses reached the mark of **10,000 combat aircraft**. These figures cannot even be compared with the losses of the enemy - the Wehrmacht simply did not have so many heavy weapons.

On September 3, 1941, Stalin, trying to both frighten and pity Churchill, wrote to him: *"Without these two types of assistance (it was about the landing of the British in France and the supply of 400 aircraft and 500 tanks to the USSR monthly. - M.S.) The Soviet Union will either be defeated, or ... will lose for a long time the ability to take active actions on the front of the struggle against Hitlerism ... "* [72, p. 233]. Ten days later, Stalin did what tens of thousands of victims of the Great Terror were accused of and shot for: he called on the British imperialists to invade the country of the victorious proletariat. On September 13, he already asked Churchill *"to land 25-30 divisions in Arkhangelsk or transfer them through Iran to the southern regions of the USSR"* [72, p. 239]. Shocked by such a turn

events, Churchill wrote to Roosevelt: *"We could not get rid of the impression that they (the Soviet leaders. - M.S.) might be thinking about a separate peace ..."*

Who knows - if Hitler had listened to the smart advice of many of his accomplices and ended the war with the Soviet Union on approximately the same conditions on which the truce with France was signed on June 24, 1940 (i.e., reducing the army to 10 infantry divisions, disarming the French aviation and navy, the demilitarization of the economy), then the history of the Old World would have developed

otherwise...

During the three months of the war, from June 22 to September 26, in the southern theater alone, Soviet troops lost **1,934,700** small arms of all types, i.e. rifles, machine guns, machine guns and revolvers. All in all, in 1941 the Red Army lost **6,290,000 small arms** [35, p. 367]. Strictly speaking, this figure alone gives an exhaustive answer to the question about the notorious "mystery of 1941". For the readers who are most indignant at the author's vile hints, I remind you that this figure is taken from the statistical collection "Secret Classified Removed", compiled by employees of the General Staff of the Russian Army under the general supervision of Colonel General G.F. Krivosheev.

On page 367 of the same collection, anyone can read that on all fronts in the six months of 1941, 40,600 guns of all types and 60,500 mortars were lost. Well, these losses are still somehow explainable. A gun is a heavy thing. Even the lightest (76-mm regimental model of 1927) weighed almost a ton. The long-range 152 mm gun of the 1935 model weighed 17 tons. How to get her out of the encirclement if the tractor broke down or was left in the chaos of retreat without fuel? And how to move this monster through the first stream? Wade - get stuck, across the bridge - but it still needs to be found, and not every bridge can withstand 17 tons. Soviet historians explained the loss

of tens of thousands of tanks and aircraft long ago and simply: old, unreliable "coffins" burned "like candles", there was no fuel, there were no spare parts ... What else is there to argue about? But where did the millions of small arms go? The most massive "small arms" of 1941 is the Mosin rifle. This rifle was and remains an unsurpassed example of reliability and

durability. She could be drowned in a swamp, buried in sand, dropped into salty sea water - and she kept shooting and shooting. The weight of this true masterpiece of engineering is 3.5 kg without cartridges. This means that any young and healthy man (namely, these were the Red Army in the summer of 1941) could carry 3-4 rifles from the battlefield without much effort. And even the most seedy collective farm mare, harnessed to a simple peasant cart, could take a hundred pints left over from the dead and wounded soldiers to the rear.

And further. Rifles "just like that" are not handed out. Each has its own individual number, each is issued personally and against signature. Everyone, even the "youngest" fighter of the first year of service, was explained that he would go to court for the loss of personal weapons.

However, let's not simplify. In war as in war. It is not always possible to collect all the rifles on the battlefield to the last. Not every truck and not every wagon with weapons in a combat situation reach their destination. Finally, a certain number of rifles and machine guns could in fact have been damaged by fire, explosion, polar cold ... On the same page 367 of the collection "Secrecy stamp removed" you can read that 1.04 were lost in four months of 1945 million units of small arms, and for 12 months of 1944 - 2.81 million units. Does this mean that in the six months of 1941, the "normal"

for the Red Army (in the Wehrmacht, the loss of small arms was incomparably less) the loss of small arms should have been expressed in a figure of about 1.5 million units? No, this is a wrong, hasty conclusion. In 1944-1945. the strength of the active army of armor is twice as large as in 1941 (6.4 million versus 3.0 million, see p. 53 of the same collection). More people, more weapons - more and loss of weapons. It would be more correct to think something like this: in 1944, one million soldiers "lost" 36,000 small arms per month, therefore, in six months of 1941, "normal" losses should not have exceeded 650-700 thousand units. And lost - 6.3

million

So, there is an "excessive" loss in 1941 of more than **5.5 million** small arms. Remember, dear reader, this is the number. We will meet again soon. And now we

we will try to estimate the "excessive losses" in other types of weapons. Hitler's

"blitzkrieg" is mainly a tank war. The main means of anti-tank defense of that time was anti-tank guns. As of June 22, 1941, there were 14,900 of them in the Red Army (in fact, even more, since the compilers of the collection "Secrecy Removed" for some reason did not take into account the 76-mm and 88-mm guns that were in service with the PTABs). In the six months of 1941, industry transferred another 2,500 anti-tank guns to the troops. In total - a total resource of 17,400 units, of which **70% (12,100 guns)** were lost. And for the whole of 1943 - for all of its 12 months - 5500 anti-tank guns

were lost, which amounted to only **14.6%** of the total resource. As an example for comparison, 1943 was not chosen by chance. This is the year of grandiose tank battles on the Kursk Bulge, this is the year when the Germans began mass production of heavy tanks "Tiger" and "Panther", against which our "forty-fives" (namely, they still accounted for 95% of the total resource of 1943) were completely helpless. And yet, in 1943, the Red Army lost an average of 460 anti-tank guns per month, and in 1941, at a time when two of the three German tanks on the Eastern Front were light vehicles with bulletproof armor, 2000 in month. **4.5 times more.** Equally "expressive" are the proportions of losses of field artillery guns. In 1943, 5,700 guns were lost (**9.7%** of the resource),

and in six months of 1941 - 24,400 (**56%** of the total resource). The conditional "average monthly" losses in 1941 were **8.5 times greater** than in the year 1943. Against the general gloomy background, one single "bright spot" stands out sharply, namely: the loss of heavy large-caliber guns (203 mm and more) in 1941 amounted to only 9.1% of the resource. The solution is extremely simple. Before us is a typical example of what is called "an exception that only confirms the rule."

Heavy artillery (and it really was heavy, from 17 to 45 tons) in the very first days of the war was **withdrawn from the territory of the Western military districts** to the deep rear. Marshal of Artillery N.D. Yakovlev (head of the GAU during the war years) recalls:

"... The most important event, which I am proud of to this day, was the categorical order of the Headquarters, adopted on my recommendation, to withdraw all artillery of large and special power to the rear. Moreover, the withdrawal was immediate, without reference to the difficult situation of the first days of the war... All guns of 203 and 280 mm caliber, as well as 152-mm long-range guns (only a few were lost) with personnel ended up in the rear in time..." [170, p. 92]. It is difficult to say

whether one should be proud of such a decision, but it was implemented, and the guns taken out "to the deep rear" turned out to be outside the zone of chaos and stampede in the first months of the war.

That's why they survived. Theoretically, the most reliable type of firearm is the mortar. A pipe - it is a pipe, there is simply nothing to break there: there is no shutter, there is not a single moving part, the "pipe" itself (unlike the barrel of an artillery gun) is almost not loaded with pressure of powder gases. Nevertheless, in the second half of 1941, the losses of 50-mm mortars amounted to 64% of the total resource, 82-mm mortars - 60% of the resource, 120-mm mortars - 51% of the resource. Exactly the same mortars almost stopped breaking in 1943: in 12 months, 12.5, 9.2, 8.6% of the total resource of mortars of caliber 50, 82 and 120 mm were lost, respectively.

The main question: in the summer of 1941, **were all these guns (mortars, machine guns, tanks, rifles, aircraft) lost in battle or abandoned** by soldiers and commanders of the Red Army who fled through the forests and fields?

SO MUCH AND SO MUCH AGAIN

On July 17, 1941, the head of the Political Propaganda Department of the Southwestern Front, Mikhailov,

reported: *"... In parts of the front, there were many cases of panic flight from the battlefield by individual servicemen, groups, and subunits. Panic was often transferred by self-seekers and cowards to other units, disorienting higher headquarters about the actual state of affairs at the front, about the combat and numerical strength, and about their losses.*

The number of deserters is exceptionally high. In the 6th Rifle Corps alone, during the first 10 days of the war, deserters were detained and 5,000 people returned to the front ...

According to incomplete data, during the war period, detachments detained about 54,000 people who lost their units and lagged behind them, including 1,300 command personnel ... "[68]. This

is according to "incomplete data", and these are only those who, in the context of the general collapse of the Southwestern Front, were detained for three weeks

The number of deserters not caught can be judged from the fact that, according to the collection "Secrecy Removed", the losses of the Southwestern Front from June 22 to July

6 amounted to: - 65,755

wounded and sick, - 165,452 killed and

missing. With the help of the letter "and", the compilers of the collection cleverly hid deserters in the total number of irretrievable losses, but taking into account the ratio of wounded and killed, which is very stable for all armed conflicts of the 20th century, as 3 to 1, it can be assumed that about 140 thousand people (ten divisions !) went on the run or surrendered. And this is only on one front and only in the first two weeks of the war. Those very weeks during which the complete defeat of the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front took place (which was discussed in part 2 of our book). Those

who were caught and returned to service in one way or another made up only a part (as will be shown below - a small part) of the total number of "deserters". The quotation marks are not random. The situation that developed in the Red Army in the summer of 1941 was as follows:

that the use of generally accepted terms to describe it becomes extremely difficult.

The "typical scheme" of the defeat and disappearance of the military unit of the Red Army (as can be seen from many memoirs, books,

documents) was as follows: Point one. Loss of a commander. The reasons could be very different: he died, was wounded, went to clarify the situation to a higher headquarters, shot himself, just ran away. With regard to units formed in the western, "liberated" regions of the USSR, this list can be added and "killed by subordinates." The loss of a commander was the most common, but not the only "push" that led to the rapid disintegration of a military unit. Such an impetus could have been a real breakthrough of enemy tanks in the flank and rear, and automatic shooting, arranged by a small group of German motorcyclists, or even just someone's heart-rending cry: "Surrounded!" Point two.

The junior commanders, who took command of the decapitated military unit, decide to "break through to the east." The saving simplicity of such a solution is deceptive. It is impossible to break away on foot from a motorized enemy, and transport and fuel in a military unit deprived of communications and supplies quickly runs out. Having left the field fortifications and leaving most of the heavy weapons behind, the troops are turning into a defenseless target for enemy aircraft and artillery. Finally, the very situation of the retreat, the feeling of weakness in the face of the enemy, is extremely demoralizing for the troops. Point three. After several unsuccessful attempts to break

through, the survivors decide to "withdraw in small groups." All. This is the end. After a few days (or hours), the former battalion (regiment, division) crumbles into dust and ashes. Point four. A huge number of lonely

"wanderers", having wandered aimlessly, without meaning and without food through the fields and forests, go out to the villages, to the people. And in the village - the Germans. Further options are already very few: a compassionate widow, a prisoner of war camp, service in the "police".

That's all. What word can we call these people? Deserters, traitors to the motherland, who strayed from the military unit, missing,

surrendered, captured? What scales, what ruler can be used to measure, what is more in this scheme: "they didn't know how to fight" or "they didn't want to fight"? And is it even possible to separate these categories - skill and desire, qualifications and motivation - in such a "type of activity" as war, where a person is required to overcome every minute the basic instinct of self-preservation for all living things?

Far from pretending to replace the judiciary and give personal assessments, we will try to at least roughly assess the scale of the phenomenon itself.

Chronologically, the first (and probably the most massive) type of desertion was draft evasion for mobilization in the first days and weeks of the war. For a reader who was born in the post-war USSR and brought up on endless stories about crowds of high school students who besieged military registration and enlistment offices, such a formulation itself will sound like malicious slander. However, already in 1992, quite official military historians, the authors of the monograph "1941: Lessons and Conclusions"

cited the following figures: *"In total, 5,631,600 people from the mobilization resources of the Soviet Union were left on the territory temporarily occupied by the enemy ... in the Baltic OVO these losses amounted to 810,844, in ZapOVO - 889,112, in KOVO-1, 625,174 and in Odessa Military District*

- 813,412 people ... "[3, p. 114]. Of course, not every one of these **5.6 million cases of non-appearance** of persons liable for military service at the recruiting station should be considered as deliberate draft evasion. Quite often, the recruiting office itself disappeared before the conscripts could arrive. But it is not worth exaggerating the importance of the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht, and even more so declaring this the main reason for the multimillion-dollar losses of the draft contingent.

Geography with arithmetic in this matter is extremely simple.

The Western Special Military District occupied the territory of the whole of Belarus and the Smolensk region of the RSFSR. The Germans occupied most of this territory only **by the**

end of July 1941. The Kiev OVO is the entire Right-bank Ukraine and part of the left bank within the Kiev region. The Germans appeared beyond the Dnieper only **in September**.

Odessa Military District is not only Odessa region, but also Mykolaiv, Kherson. Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine, Moldova and Crimea. The occupation of these vast expanses of the Black Sea and Azov regions was completed only **in the late autumn** of

1941. If several months were not enough to collect recruits, for which **a few days were allotted according to the mobilization plan**, then the use of the term "draft evasion" becomes quite appropriate and justified. We should not forget that not all those who arrived at the military enlistment office later ended up in the ranks of the army. In Eastern, largely Russified, Ukraine (modern Kharkiv region), this "far from all" was expressed in such figures: at the end of October 1941, the percentage of deserters from among recruits was 30% for the Chuguev district military commissariat, 35% for Stalin, 45 % - according to Izyumsky. This is Eastern Ukraine. According to modern Ukrainian historians, the vast majority of those mobilized in Western Ukraine remained in the territory occupied by the Germans. As for desertion directly from military

units, in the second half of 1941, the NKVD bodies for the protection of the military rear detained 638 thousand people suspected of desertion. In total, during the war , **376,000 servicemen** were convicted for desertion (according to the data of the same collection "Secrecy Removed") [35, p. 140]. Another **940,000** people were "called for the second time" [35, p. 338]. This strange term denotes those soldiers and commanders of the Red Army who, for various reasons, "lost" their military unit and remained in the territory occupied by the Germans, and in 1943-1944. were re-armed. Moreover, among them were found not only collective farm men in soldier's windings, but also two generals: the head of artillery of the 24th army, Moshenin, and the commander of the 189th division, Chichkanov. At the same time, one should not forget that the initial number of "lost" was much higher - not everyone was able to survive these two or three years of poverty, hunger, shelling, executions, raids and bombings ...

On page 140 of the collection "Secrecy Removed" the total number of all categories of retired personnel: killed, dead, missing, captured, convicted and sent to the Gulag

(and not to the penal battalion, which is part of the army), demobilized due to injury and illness and "others" - does not converge with the total number indicated on the previous page of "who left the Armed Forces for various reasons" by 2,343,000 people. The authors of the collection directly explain this inconsistency by "a significant number of unidentified deserters." The Stalinist

leadership tried to stop the flow of fugitives in the only way known and accessible to it - mass executions. Only in less than four months of the war (from June 22 to October 10, 1941), 10,201 servicemen were shot by the verdicts of military tribunals and Special Finishes of the NKVD. In total, over 994 thousand Soviet military personnel were convicted during the war years by military tribunals alone, **of which 157,593 people were shot** [118, p. 139]. TEN DIVISIONS shot!

Everything is relative. The German historian Fritz Hahn, on the basis of the memos that the Wehrmacht command submitted to Hitler, cites the following figures. During the three years of the war (from September 1, 1939 to September 1, 1942), 2,271 servicemen, including 11 officers, were sentenced to death in the multi-million Wehrmacht [60]. 2 people per day. And in the Red Army in 1941 - 92 people a day. In just four

years of the war (from September 1, 1939 to September 1, 1944), 7,810 soldiers and officers were shot in the Wehrmacht. Twenty **times less** than in the Red Army. No, these are not just different numbers, different quantities. This is a different quality of society and power.

There is no war without losses, without dead, without wounded. And no prisoners. No one has yet managed to organize combat operations in such a way that not a single soldier, not a single unit was in a helpless state, surrounded, without weapons and ammunition. So in the Wehrmacht, despite all the German organization and love of order, during the first three years of World War II (until September 1, 1942), the total number of missing and captured reached 69 thousand people. On average, two thousand people every month. This is according to German, possibly underestimated

credentials. According to the Soviet General Staff, in the first year of the war (until July 1, 1942), the Red Army captured 17,285 soldiers and

enemy officers. In the summer of 1944, during the grandiose and brilliantly conducted offensive operation of the Soviet troops in Belarus (Operation Bagration), the German Army Group Center was almost completely defeated. About 80 thousand Wehrmacht soldiers were then in Soviet captivity. Everything is

relative. What happened in the summer and autumn of 1941 with the Red Army goes beyond all the usual ideas. The history of wars did not know this. Let's open once again the statistical collection "Secrecy stamp removed", this time on pages 234-246. It contains data on the losses of the active fronts in 1941. The uniqueness of these pages is that the numbers (I ask you, dear reader, forget for a while about the tragedy that lies behind these numbers, and focus on simple and clear arithmetic) of those killed and missing are not combined into a single array with the help of a crafty letter "I", but are shown separately. For greater clarity, we summarize the available information in the next table.

	Общие потери, тыс. чел. /%	Убитые, %	Санитарные потери, %	Пропало без вести, небоевые и проч., %
Северный фронт	148/100	15,1	42,4	42,6
Северо-Западный фронт	270/100	11,7	32,5	55,8
Западный фронт	1.298/100	8,2	26,3	65,4
Юго-Западный фронт	852/100	7,1	15,7	77,2
Южный фронт	312/100	10,4	23,6	66,0
Центральный фронт	143/100	6,4	22,4	71,2
Брянский фронт	198/100	7,2	21,5	71,3

As we can see, with the exception of the distant northern flank of the war (Northern Front), **the number of missing persons is 5-10 times greater than the number of those killed.** Or, in other words, it is **the mass capture and desertion that are the main component of the irretrievable losses of the Red Army in 1941.** The situation on the Northern Front is quite suitable for the definition of "an exception that confirms the rule." Neither the conditions of the terrain nor the armament of the impoverished Finnish army allowed it to carry out major operations to encircle the enemy. The fighting had the character of a slow "pushing out" of the Red Army units beyond the 1939 border line. However, even with this "pushing out", 64,188 Soviet soldiers were captured by the Finns [32].

The above monstrous figures **are significantly underestimated**. The reality was even worse and more shameful. The fact is that, according to the collection "Secrecy Removed", the total number of missing on all fronts allegedly amounted to "only" 2335 thousand people in 1941 [35, p. 146], while, according to the reports of the Wehrmacht High Command, the number of prisoners alone (excluding deserters, whose number the Germans could not manage) amounted to 3886 thousand people (including 113 thousand in June and 2369

thousand in the third quarter of 1941). Military propaganda of the enemy? Who knows, the Germans were very careful and reserved in this matter. So, speaking on December 11, 1941 in the Reichstag, Hitler stated that the Red Army had lost 21,000 tanks, 17,000 aircraft, 33,000 guns and 3,806,865 **prisoners of war** [115]. As you can see, the figures for the loss of military equipment as a whole do not exceed the official data of modern Russian military history, and the loss of guns is even underestimated! A similar figure - 3.6 million prisoners who survived as of the end of February 1942 - is also mentioned in the correspondence between Keitel and Rosenberg, which was secret and was by no means

intended for propaganda purposes [74]. By the end of July 1941, the flow of prisoners of war exceeded the Wehrmacht's ability to protect and maintain them. On July 25, 1941, the order of the Quartermaster General No. 11/4590 was issued, in accordance with which the mass release of prisoners of a number of nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Balts) began. During the validity of this order, i.e. until November 13, 1941, 318,770 former Red Army soldiers were sent home (mainly

Ukrainians - 277,761 people) [35, p. 334]. And the Soviet leadership found it necessary to somehow respond to such an unheard-of behavior of their subjects. On August 16, the famous Headquarters Order No. 270 "On cases of cowardice and surrender and measures to suppress such actions" was issued. For greater persuasiveness, Order No. 270 was countersigned by Stalin, Molotov, Budyonny, Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov and Zhukov. It is unlikely

that in the military history of civilized countries there is an analogue of such a c

1. *Commanders and political workers who, during a battle, tear off their insignia and desert to the rear or surrender to the enemy, are considered malicious deserters, whose families are subject to arrest as the families of deserters who violated the oath and betrayed their homeland. To oblige all higher commanders and commissars to shoot such deserters from the command staff on the spot.*

2. *Units and subunits that are surrounded by the enemy selflessly fight to the last opportunity, take care of the materiel as the apple of their eye, break through to their rear of the enemy troops, defeating the fascist dogs.*

To oblige each serviceman, regardless of his official position, to demand from a superior commander, if part of him is surrounded, to fight to the last opportunity in order to break through to his own, and if such a commander or part of the Red Army men, instead of organizing a rebuff to the enemy, prefer to surrender - to destroy them by all means, both ground and air, and deprive the families of Red Army soldiers who have surrendered of state benefits and assistance ... Read the order in all companies, squadrons, batteries,

squadrons, teams and headquarters" [6, p. 479].

Exceptionally important for understanding Comrade Stalin's way of thinking is the fact that in this fundamental order he did not even consider it possible or necessary to mention such lofty motives as "defending the gains of October", "saving mankind from fascist barbarism." He did not talk about Dmitry Donskoy, or about Alexander Nevsky, or about the thousand-year history of Russia. Simply and bluntly, the soldiers of the Red Army were reminded that their families - if they are in the territory controlled by the authorities of the NKVD / VKP (b) - are **hostages of their behavior at the front**. The threat to destroy those who surrendered "*by all means, both ground and air*" was also not an empty phrase. In the autumn of 1941, Soviet aircraft bombed the POW camps in the Orel and Novgorod-Seversky regions. It is worth recalling the well-known fact that the Soviet Union refused all cooperation with the International Red Cross, which made it impossible to provide assistance - first of all

food and medicine - to the Red Army soldiers in German captivity. Alas, even with

such measures, it was not possible to awaken the "love of the Soviet people for war" praised at the time by Voroshilov. The Red Army soldiers continued to drop their weapons and dispersed in crowds through the forests. Not even a month had passed since the issuance of Order No. 270, as on September 12 Directive No. 001919 of the Headquarters was adopted on the creation of barrage detachments, numbering at least one company per rifle regiment. The first lines of this Directive said

the following verbatim: *"The experience of fighting German fascism has shown that in our rifle divisions there are quite a few panicked and directly hostile elements who, **at the first pressure from the enemy** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), drop their weapons, start shouting "we are surrounded" and drag the rest of the fighters with them. As a result, the division takes to flight, abandons its materiel, and then, alone, begins to leave the forest. Similar phenomena take place on all fronts..."* [5, p. 180]. By the time this

Directive was issued, more than one and a half million fighters and commanders of the Red Army were already in German captivity (1493 thousand at the end of August). Two days after the adoption of Headquarters Directive No. 00191.9, on September 14, 1941, the advanced units of the 1st and 2nd tank groups of the Wehrmacht closed the encirclement ring of the giant Kyiv "boiler". A huge, half a million strong grouping of Soviet troops stopped organized resistance in less than one week. The Wehrmacht High Command then announced the capture of 665 thousand prisoners,

3718 guns and 884 tanks. October 1941 began with the encirclement of the main forces of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts (67 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions, 13 tank brigades) in the two largest "cauldrons" - near Vyazma and Bryansk. According to the Wehrmacht High Command, 658 thousand people were taken prisoner, 5396 guns and 1241 tanks were captured. The October catastrophe (which cannot be attributed to the "surprise attack" and the notorious "non-mobilization of the army") far exceeded the defeat of the Western Front that took place in June 1941 in its scale . generals

the highest level caught in German captivity. Among them: commander of the 19th army Lukin, commander of the 20th army Ershakov, member of the Military Council of the 32nd army Zhilenkov, commander of the 32nd army Vishnevsky, chief of staff of the 19th army Malyshev, chief of artillery of the 24th army Moshenin, chief artillery of the 20th army of Prokhorov ...

Along with the prisoners captured in battle (or at least in the battle formations of the Soviet troops), in the very first weeks of the war, the Germans also encountered a mass of defectors who were in a hurry to leave the location of their unit and surrender to the German captured before the battle. For their maintenance, the Wehrmacht even had to create several special camps. True, the report of the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression states that the number of defectors in the Red Army was very small: *"In the first year of the war, no more than 1.4-1.5% of the total number of prisoners of war"* [74]. Yes, in percentage terms, this is almost nothing. But in absolute terms - at least 40 thousand people. It is simply impossible to compare this with the number of German defectors - the number of defectors in the Wehrmacht during the first three years of the war was expressed in

the double-digit number 29. The very sound of the word "defector" can conjure up in the reader's imagination the image of a man running across the field and screaming heart-rendingly: "Nicht schießen, Stalin kaput !" It happened, of course, and so. And it happened quite differently. For example, on August 22, 1941, Major I. Kononov, a member of the Bolshevik Party since 1929, a holder of the Order of the Red Banner, a graduate of the Frunze Academy, went to the Germans. He left with a part of the fighters of his 436th rifle regiment (155th rifle division, 13th army, Bryansk Front), with a battle banner and even with the commissar (!) Of the regiment D. Panchenko. A year later, in September 1942, the "102nd Cossack division" of the Wehrmacht, formed

from prisoners of war under the command of Kononov, consisted of 1799 people [74, 119]. Dozens of pilots flew to the Germans along with combat aircraft. Later, a "Russian" air unit of the Luftwaffe under the command of Colonel Maltsev was formed from them and the pilots who were in the camps. Among them were two Heroes of the Soviet Union: fighter Captain Bychkov and attack aircraft Senior Lieutenant Antilevsky. Yes, and Ma

awarded the Order of Lenin, but fell under the "wheel" of mass repression in 1938 [120].

"Cossack divisions" and "Russian air unit of the Luftwaffe" are exotic. A much more reliable, understandable and, as a result, the most massive way to use former Soviet people was to enroll them in the regular units of the Wehrmacht as the so-called "voluntary helpers" (Hilfswillige, or, in short, "Khivi"). Initially, the "Khivi" served as drivers, storekeepers, orderlies, sappers, thus releasing "full-fledged Aryans" for direct participation in hostilities. Then, as the losses of the Wehrmacht grew, the Russian "volunteers" began to arm. In April 1942, the German army had **200 thousand**, and in July 1943 - **600 thousand** "Khivi". There were especially many of them in those units and formations of the Wehrmacht that passed through Ukraine and the Cossack regions of the Don and Kuban. So, in November 1942, in the 6th army of Paulus surrounded at Stalingrad, there were 51,800 "Khivi", and in the 71st, 76th and 297th infantry divisions of this army, the "Russians" (as all former Soviets were called) amounted to 40% of the personnel! In the summer of 1942, there were 47,000 "volunteers" in Manstein's 11th Army. From October 1943, the Heavis were included in the standard staff of a German infantry division in the amount of 2 thousand people per division (74, 119, 153, 155th). In the end, the scale of this unparalleled cooperation

with the invaders both in the history of Russia and in the history of the Second World War became so great that the Wehrmacht high command created a special post of "Inspector General of the Eastern Troops." In February 1943, under the command of General Kestring, about 750 thousand people served in the ranks of the Wehrmacht, SS and air defense. This figure is called by foreign historians. Modern military historians from the Russian General Staff fully agree with them: *"The number of personnel of the military formations of "voluntary assistants", police and auxiliary formations by mid-July 1944 exceeded **800 thousand** people..."* [35, p. 385]. Another indicator of the scale of mass cooperation with the fascist invaders is the fact that in August 1945, 145,000 people who served in the "police" and "Khivi" were sentenced to deportation to a "special settlement" [118, p. 146]. One hundred and forty five

thousands were deported - and how many went west with the Germans, how many were destroyed in battles by partisans, how many were shot in the heat of the moment ...

Returning again to the events of 1941 and by no means claiming the absolute accuracy of the numbers (the very nature of such phenomena as desertion and captivity excludes the possibility of accurate, by name accounting), we will try to estimate the total number of prisoners and deserters.

On May 1, 1942, the head of the organizational and accounting department of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army, Colonel Efremov, signed a certificate *"On the size of the Red Army, replenishment and losses during the period from the beginning of the war to March 1, 1942."* (published with reference to TsAMO, f. 14, op. 113, d. 1, l. 228-238 in the book by S.N. Mikhalev. Casualties in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945. Statistical study. Krasnoyarsk: ROI KSPU, 2000). This important document contains many figures (we will discuss some of them below), and it ends with the following two sentences: *"In total, there should be in the Red Army, taking into account the losses of*
14,197,000

people

In fact, according to the organizational staff, as of March 1, 1942, there were 9,315,000 in the Red Army. Dot. Date of. Signature.

Colonel Efremov does not give any comments on the unbiased absence of almost five million (4882 1s, to be precise) military personnel. As for the initial number of 14,197 thousand people, it was obtained by the "balance method" (in principle, known to every schoolchild by the example of solving the problem of a pool into which one pipe flows into, pours out of another), namely : - to the size of the Red Army at the beginning of the war (which Efremov defines as 4924 thousand people) - the total number of mobilized (12,490

thousand, including 11,790 thousand called up before the end of 1941) is added - and the considered irretrievable losses

are subtracted (3217 thousand people). We note right away that the number of those mobilized in the 41st year, given in the report of Efremov, is significant (by 2.2 million people)

less than what the authors of the monograph "1941 - lessons and conclusions" called. According to their calculations, a total of 14 million people were mobilized by

the end of 1941. [3. p. 110]. Summing up both components (3,217,000 recorded and 4,882,000 missing) of irretrievable losses, we get a total estimate of the "loss" of personnel at **eight million** people.

This estimate is not overestimated, which can be seen through an estimate of the balance of the number of personnel in the active army. According to the data given in Efremov's report, by August 1, 1941, there were 3,242,000 people in the active fronts, and by December 1, 1941, 3,267,000. and transfer millions of people to the Armed Forces (from 12 to 14 million in the second half of 1941). In the internal districts (according to the report of Efremov), as of December 1, 1941, there were 4527 thousand military personnel, i.e. their number, compared with the beginning of the war, increased by no more than 3 million. The rest of the mobilized (about $14 - 3 = 11$ million) were irretrievably lost at the front. Irretrievable losses are those killed, who died from wounds in hospitals, and those

who were dismissed from the army due to being wounded ("commissioned", as the people used to say). And the missing ones. There is no exact, or even approximate, distribution of irretrievable losses by these categories in Efremov's report, but there is one very meaningful phrase: *"The total number of wounded and shell-shocked, frostbite and sick (since the beginning of the war) is 1,665,000, the number returned to service, according to Sanu of the government, is approximately 1,000,000 people."*

It is the data on the number of wounded admitted to hospitals for treatment that are (according to the author) the most reliable. In the deep rear, there was more order, and accounting was at least double (both on admission and on discharge). Based on the ratio of the wounded and killed, which is very constant for all wars of the 20th century, as 3:1, it can be assumed that the number of 1665 thousand wounded corresponds to about 600 thousand killed. It is worth noting that this estimate is quite comparable with the number of dead given in Krivosheev's collection ("The classification has been removed"):

according to the reports of the headquarters of units and formations on March 1, 19

died from wounds in hospitals) amounted to 741 thousand people (the losses of January - February 1942 are calculated here as 2/3 of the losses of the first quarter of 1942). [35, p. 146].

One million wounded returned from hospitals to service, 665 thousand wounded servicemen irretrievably lost (died or were demobilized due to injury). Thus, even in the total amount of ACCOUNTED (we underline this word with three bold lines) irretrievable losses, the missing are almost two

million people:

3217 - 600 - 665 \u003d

1952. If we take the number of those killed according to the Krivosheev statistics book, then

we get 1811 thousand. And another 4882 thousand military personnel who disappeared without a trace in the reports of the headquarters. In total, **more than six and a half million people** disappeared who knows where. **As much as it was in the active army at the beginning of the war, and again so many.**

However, what does "I don't know where" mean? There were no miracles: - **3.8 million people were taken**

prisoner by the Germans - at least 1.0-1.5 million stragglers from their unit evaded both the front

and captivity - an arithmetic difference of **1.0-1, 5 million** people are **wounded, abandoned during a stampede, and not counted in reports from the front killed.** And what is most

surprising is that Soviet "historians" never considered these monstrous facts one of the reasons (even the most insignificant reason) for what they delicately called "the temporary failures of the Red Army." A bad oil filter on tank diesel engines is an important reason for the defeat, and a lot is written about it, and in the embrasures of the pillboxes of the Kyiv UR there were obsolete dampers - and mountains of paper are written about this. And the fact that millions of soldiers of the Red Army threw down their weapons and dispersed through the forests is trifles, it has nothing to do with the history of the war ...

HEADLESS

These are the facts. These facts are reliable, there are too many of them, and in their totality they allow us to assert that **the main cause of the military catastrophe of 1941 lies outside the sphere of problems of operational art or weapons**

technology. In the most concise formulation, the answer to the question about the cause of the defeat can be reduced to three words: **THERE WAS NO ARMY.** At the beginning of the Soviet-German war, not two armies met on the battlefields, but the armed forces of Nazi Germany, organized and working like a well-oiled clockwork, on the one hand, and an almost uncontrollable armed crowd, on the other. **The result of the collision of the army and the crowd could not be otherwise.** Even a huge amount of first-class weapons will not allow the crowd to defeat the army. And the disorganized crowd will pay for its defeat with losses far exceeding those of the enemy army. This is exactly what happened in the

summer of 1941. Unfortunately, such a conclusion, simple and clear, based on a willingness to face the facts honestly, is still perceived by many readers as "sensational and scandalous." Alas, the connection of times has broken up, and what the participants and witnesses of the greatest tragedy clearly understood, we have to "rediscover" today. As an illustration of the fact that even people of the first Soviet generation who grew up in the dope of Stalinist propaganda retained the ability to think clearly and honestly (an ability largely lost by their children and grandchildren), we will cite an excerpt from M. Koryakov's book "Liberation of the Soul." In 1941, the author was 30 years old, he started the war as a private, finished as a captain. After the Victory he emigrated to the West; The book was published in New York in 1952:

"... Some four months ago, the Red Army stood on the Neman, the Bug, the Prut. The Baltic States, Polissya, Volyn, Galicia, Bukovina, Bessarabia were occupied, annexed to the USSR, "liberated", in Soviet terminology. Enjoying easy, lightning-fast victories, eating free and plentiful occupying grubs, the fighters and commanders of the Red Army were in a dashing mood. That was the "Stalinist youth", grown

in an artificial greenhouse climate, full of faith in the genius of the "great, wise and beloved Stalin", in the "liberation mission of the Red Army", in the "invincibility of Soviet weapons".

The war began ... The unstable ones turned out to be sprouts of faith in Stalin, grown in a hothouse climate. They immediately withered, as soon as the hot, scorching breath of heavy and unsuccessful battles blew on them. For decades, Bolshevism has eroded the younger generation's organic, national faith in Russia; now the assertive hurricane of war had blown out faith in Stalin, too, and the soul of the Soviet soldier was empty, even as a rolling ball. Thus began the confusion of the Red Army. In July and August - the first two months of the

war - new contingents joined the active army: millions of peasants from Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Volga region, and the Central Russian zone. Not Komsomol members, but thirty-forty-year-old people, a new - deeper - people's stratum, weakly affected by Bolshevik propaganda, the ideas of the "liberation" of Europe, an offensive war. In the memory of these fighters, something else lay: how in 1930 the Bolsheviks ruined individual farms built by their fathers and grandfathers, took away horses, cows and forcibly drove them to collective farms; how in 1932 entire villages, villages and villages died of starvation, overgrown with weeds, sent to settle in the polar tundra, the sands of Turkestan, the Kolyma concentration camps.

The new replenishment brought anti-Soviet sentiments to the front, which immediately resonated with the "Stalinist youth", defeated on the borders in the first days of the war. Not only a response, but also a clear design - a direct installation on defeatism. Having lost faith in Stalin, mentally devastated, the young people of the "Stalin era" reached out to the Germans. There were "divers", hiding in the cellars, cellars. The German wave rolled - "divers" got out. Former communists and Komsomol members, as a rule, entered the German service. Elderly fighters dressed in peasant clothes, moved closer to their native village in order to divide collective farms and rebuild individual yards. Who did not have a native village nearby, settled in the hut of some village widow, a soldier

wives.

On the fields of Russia, a great military, social, political, but most importantly, the deepest psychological folk drama was played out. It is wrong to think that millions of Russian people went to the Germans. Neither to the Germans, nor to the Bolsheviks, but simply - wherever they look ...

... Nobody knew how it would all end. They knew least of all in the Supreme Headquarters, in the Kremlin. It was obvious that the position on the Lama - the last water frontier in front of Moscow - would soon be surrendered to the enemy. Not because the position was bad, unsuitable for defense. Whether she was much better, whether she met all the requirements of tactics - now it did not matter at all. The trouble was not that the troops retreated, but that the troops dispersed ... "

How simple and obvious is the immediate cause of the defeat of the Red Army, just as complex and ambiguous is the answer to another question: **WHY? Why did the Red Army find itself in such a powerless, incompetent state?** How could this happen in a state that to this day is considered by many to be a model of the strictest order and iron discipline? Why did the grandiose military machine of totalitarian despotism turn into a pile of randomly scattered "wheels and cogs" in a matter of days? There is no simple and

short answer to these questions and cannot be. Simple arithmetic is over, and further in our book we will deal with problems that, far beyond the framework of military history as such, require an appeal to social psychology, political science, i.e. to such sciences that, in principle, do not allow to come to exact, quantitative estimates.

The first among the reasons that predetermined the insignificant combat effectiveness of the Red Army of the June 1941 model should be the extremely low quality of its command

staff. War veteran Colonel T.G. Ibatullin writes in his book:

"The morale of a participant in hostilities depends primarily on the answer to three questions: - what is the meaning of war, is it fair and legal? - Is my commander able to organize the battle in such a way as to complete the task with minimal losses?"

- am I confident in my own preparation for action in combat situation? [74].

If the answer to the first question is determined by the policy pursued by the top leadership of the country, then the answers to the second and third questions do not depend on the "high government spheres", but on the company foreman, on the battalion commander and commander. It is they who must turn a crowd of armed people into a combat-ready army. It is they who must "organize the battle with minimal losses", and for this - day and night to train their subordinates, prepare them for "action in a combat situation."

The level of professional training of the command staff of the Red Army, the quality of military training of ordinary soldiers - all this is a topic for a separate, serious study. Experts who take the trouble to study this problem in depth and dispassionately will advance us to a great extent in understanding what happened in 1941 and beyond. Far from considering himself competent in such purely military matters, the author considers it possible to note only some facts that lie, as they say, on the surface. *"You have to be extremely ignorant or a blind, leavened patriot not to admit that all our military*

means and our notorious, supposedly countless army are nothing in comparison with the German army." Such "Russophobic" thoughts were expressed more than a hundred years ago by the famous anarchist M. Bakunin. What great virtues did he see in the German army? And here are some:

"... The German military world has a huge advantage - German officers surpass all officers in the world in theoretical and practical knowledge of military affairs, ardent and completely pedantic devotion to the military craft, accuracy, accuracy, endurance, stubborn patience, as well as relative honesty. As a result of all these qualities, the organization and armament of the German armies really exist, and not only on paper, as it was under Napoleon III in France, as it happens all the time with us ... "He fully agreed with the opinion of the Russian anarchist and

German Marxist F. Engels:

“... The Russian soldier is one of the bravest in Europe... Nevertheless, the Russian army does not have to boast especially. During the entire existence of Russia as such, the Russians have not yet won a single battle against the Germans, the French, the Poles or the British, without greatly outnumbering them. Under equal conditions, they were always beaten...” [122, p. 480].

F. Engels can hardly be considered a military expert, much less an impartial expert (critical, to put it mildly, Engels' attitude towards Russia and the Russians was a secret only for the Soviet communists). However, impartial facts testify that after the triumph of 1812, Russia, with depressing monotony, demonstrated its inability to turn the courage, patience, endurance, selflessness of the Russian soldier into a military victory. The Crimean War, during which a huge (in theory) Russian army was opposed by a small landing force of the Western allies, ended in a crushing defeat. The same crushing - but even more bloody and costly - defeat ended the war with Japan (1904-1905). The First World War, during which the Russian army suffered greater casualties than its Western allies, ended in victory for the allies, and for Russia in a chain of heavy defeats at the front, a growing economic crisis in the rear, the collapse of the state, and, finally, the "Brest Peace" , the terms of which were not much different from surrender.

In a word, the Bolsheviks inherited not the most enviable legacy in the military sphere. Moreover, they themselves have worked to squander and squander this “legacy”. Those regular officers of the Russian army who did not die in the battles of the Civil War and did not have time to emigrate, the Bolsheviks exterminated almost without exception. They fired mercilessly in 1918-1920; several thousand former officers were arrested in 1929-1931; as part of the largest KGB operation "Spring"; the few survivors were finished off during the years of the Great Terror of 1937-1938.

So, from a "blank slate" covered in the blood of the commanders of the old Russian army, Stalin began to prepare a new generation of command cadres. Let's be fair - the Boss tried his best. He cherished and cherished the top of the army, showered her with honors and privileges. The level of material and social comfort in which they lived

"Red commanders", far exceeded everything that was available to a highly qualified engineer or doctor (not to mention a poor collective farmer or a half-starved worker living in a factory barracks). The costs were great. Things were much worse with the result.

In any country and in all ages, a military career has been one of the ways that a guy from a simple, poor family can "break out into the people." The trouble is that in the Soviet Union this method became almost the only one, and the origin from the family of the "poorest peasant" became an indispensable condition for a successful career. As a result, there were too many people who wanted to rise "from rags to riches", doing nothing, not learning anything, not really answering for anything, but only agreeing to wear government boots and an overcoat. They looked at their command service as a lucky lottery ticket, guaranteeing lifelong comfort and a carefree existence. Alas, on yesterday's village lumpen, who had neither mind, nor education, nor noble honor, nor proletarian "revolutionary consciousness", plentiful food (and even more plentiful booze) had an absolutely corrupting effect.

"... The luxurious hall of the club was immersed in twilight. A large rotating ball suspended from the ceiling scattered a mass of bunnies around the hall, creating the illusion of falling snow. Men in uniforms and tuxedos and ladies in long evening gowns or operetta costumes danced to the sound of jazz. Many of the women were wearing masks and extremely picturesque costumes, borrowed from the dressing rooms of the Bolshoi Theatre. The tables were bursting with champagne, liqueurs and vodka... Some colonel of the border troops shouted in drunken ecstasy: "This is life, guys! Thanks to Comrade Stalin for our happy childhood!" This is

how the famous Chekist defector, resident of the NKVD in Spain, Orlov (Feldbin) describes a ball in the NKVD club that took place in 1936. Of course, there were other commanders, and they tried to shout about something completely different. So, the commander of the Belarusian military district, commander I.P. Belov, who was on a business trip to Germany, on October 7, 1930, wrote from there to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Voroshilov:

"... When you look at how brutally German officers work on themselves - from second lieutenant to general, how they work on preparing units, what results they achieve, it hurts inside from the consciousness of our weakness. I would like to shout with a good obscenity about the need for the most intense study - a decisive reworking of all weak commanders ...

" [71, p. 272]. Belov was shot. And not just him. A detailed examination of the causes, design and course of the Great Terror goes far beyond the scope of our narrative. Let us note only a few points that are directly related to the topic of this chapter.

One of the most common myths is that by the mid-1930s, highly professional and (which is already completely inexplicable) "experienced" military personnel were trained, and only "the repressions of 1937 deprived the army of command personnel." There is nothing to argue about this issue. You just need to know the facts. In two years (1938-1939) the Red Army received 158,000 commanders, political workers and other military specialists. In the three pre-war years (1939-1941), 48,000 people graduated from military schools, and 80,000 advanced courses. In the first half of 1941, another 70 thousand officers were sent from schools and academies to the troops. In total, as of January 1, 1941, the payroll of the commanding officers of the army and navy was 579,581 people. In addition, in four years (from 1937 to 1940) 448,000 reserve officers were trained [150]. Arrested in 1937-1938 were (according

to various authors) no more than 10 thousand commanders and political workers [1, p. 368]. As for those who died during the years of repression, the most complete list of names compiled by O. Suvenirov consists of 1634 names of commanders who were shot and tortured during the "investigation" [149]. Without even trying to justify this heinous crime and whitewash the leaders and direct perpetrators of the bloody terror, one should nevertheless recognize the obvious fact that if all the dead had survived, then the total number of Red Army commanders would have increased by only 0.3 percent. . A very modest shortage of command personnel (13% on January 1, 1941)

was due not to repressions at all, but to a three-fold increase in numbers in three years and a huge increase in technical

equipment of the Armed Forces. Finally, we should once again recall that the notorious "understaffing" is just a discrepancy between the actual and regular strength. And staffing can be very different. For example, in the Wehrmacht, there were 29 soldiers and non-commissioned officers per officer, in the French - 22, in the Japanese - 19. And only in the Red Army was it supposed to have one officer (political worker) for 6 soldiers and sergeants [1, p. 365]. It cannot be said that from such an "excess" of commanders in the Red Army there was more order. *"I fought in the war of 1914-1917,"* the commander of the 141st Rifle Division, Colonel Tetushkin, wrote on July 10, 1942,

to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Malenkov. - *There were two at the headquarters of the regiment: the regiment commander and the adjutant, at the headquarters of the division there were three or four - and that's it. Now we have dozens of people at the command post of the regiment commander, hundreds of people at the command post of the division commander, and in the army or at the front, I can't even say whether there are clouds there. Moreover, they all drive cars, come, bring some scribble and fall asleep at this headquarters for a week. And the enemy's rear and headquarters staff is at least ten times smaller than ours ... "*

The thesis that in 1937 "the very best were shot, and mediocrity and crooks were appointed in their place" is not based on anything other than unfounded allegations. Judging by such a formal criterion as the level of education, from 1937 to 1941 the number of officers with higher and secondary military education not only did not decrease, but significantly (twofold) increased. From 164 to 385 thousand people. On the eve of the war, on the eve of the war, in positions from battalion commander and above, the share of commanding staff without military education was only 0.1% [1, p. 366]. Among the division commanders as of January 1, 1941, 40% had a higher military education, and 60% had a secondary military education. Among corps commanders, respectively, 52 and 48% [68]. Another question is what was the

"efficiency" of this training, if the Military Academy. Frunze received commanders with two classes of the parochial school. Unfortunately, these words are not exaggerated. It was with such an "education" that the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov and Timoshenko, who replaced him as People's Commissar, commander of the most powerful, Kyiv military district, Zhukov and

Kirponos, who replaced him in this post. Against such a background, Zhukov's predecessor as Chief of the General Staff Meretskov looks simply indecently intelligent - he had four classes in a rural school and an evening school for adults in Moscow.

By the way, exactly the same situation was in the civil administration. In the mid-1930s, among the secretaries of district committees and city committees of the CPSU (b), 70% had only primary education. M.M. worked as the People's Commissar for the defense (and then aviation!) Industry. Kaganovich, in whose biography no traces of any education are found at all. Here is another example from a later period. In April 1948, among the 171 military commandants in East Germany (and, presumably, the most "respectable" officers in all respects were selected for such a position), 108 people had only a primary education, 52 had a secondary education, and only 11 officers had a higher education [74 , p. 65].

It was not the repressions of 1937 that caused such a deplorable state of affairs. The attraction of semi-literate, but "socially close" personnel was the basis of personnel policy in the 20s, and in the 30s, and in the 40s. For some reason, it is customary to forget that a considerable number of so-called "experienced military leaders, heroes of the Civil War" successfully survived the 37th year and met the 41st year in the highest ranks. These are People's Commissar of Defense Marshal Timoshenko, his deputies Marshals Budyonny and Kulik, Chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Marshal Voroshilov, Commander of the Moscow Military District (from the beginning of the war - the Southern Front) General of the Army Tyulenev, Commander-in-Chief of the Cavalry Colonel-General Gorodovikov... All of them are people of the same generation, the same political and life school as the repressed Blucher, Yegorov, Tukhachevsky, Dybenko, Fedko. All of them showed themselves so "gloriously" that already six months or a year after the start of the war, Stalin had to send them away from sin, to the deep rear. At the final, victorious stage of the war, these mountain commanders in the army already

few people remembered.

Why, knowing how the survivors showed themselves, do we continue to build illusions about the executed? Why is it generally accepted that the execution of Tukhachevsky demoralized the army to a greater extent than the mass executions of Tambov peasants,

produced in the summer of 1921 on the orders of Tukhachevsky himself? Finally, were the "victims of 1937" themselves courageous commanders (and for a military leader, the lack of personal courage is nothing more than a sign of professional incompetence) or just obese officials of the military department? Among several

hundred top commanders of the army and the NKVD (and each of them had bodyguards, personal weapons, secret agents) there was not a single one who would dare to raise a "micro-rebellion" or at least offer armed resistance to arrest. Only a few people dared to passive resistance (escape) (the head of the Far Eastern NKVD, Lyushkov, and the resident of the NKVD in Spain, Orlov, fled beyond the cordon, the chief Chekist of Ukraine, Uspensky, hid on the run for several months). All the rest dutifully carried their heads to the chopping block, dutifully "denounced and exposed" their arrested comrades, at best they put a bullet in their foreheads.

The commander of the 1st rank, the commander of the troops of the Kyiv district I. Yakir, sentenced to death for crimes that he obviously did not commit, wrote to Stalin from a prison cell: "Dear, close comrade Stalin! I am dying with words of love for you ... "On June 2, 1937, speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Military Council, Stalin said about the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, Y. Gamarnik, who had shot himself: "If I were in his place, I would ask to see Stalin, *first I would have laid him down, and then I would have killed myself.*" What was behind these words? Mockery? Provocation? The cry of the tormented soul of a man who is tired of communicating

with insignificant little people? As you know, in the German Armed Forces there was nothing like repression against the top command staff of the Red Army - and this at a time when Germany was undergoing a radical change in the ruling elites. And this despite the fact that the highest generals allowed themselves frank frondism in relation to the corporal, who became the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Was the incredible (by the standards of Comrade Stalin) tolerance shown by Hitler a manifestation of wise foresight - or did the Wehrmacht command staff simply not allow the "Führer" to treat them in any other way?

Of course, the negative impact of mass repression on the combat effectiveness of the Red Army was, and it was huge. Mass repression, mass denunciation, mass transformation

yesterday's heroes into "enemies of the people, despicable spies and wreckers" undermined the foundation of the foundations of army morality: the unconditional authority of the commander. The army rests on one-man command, but this one-man command cannot be ensured only by the commander's right, provided for by the Charter, to "use force and weapons" in relation to a disobedient subordinate. On the battlefield, the fear of the commander will be immediately swept away by the fear of the armed enemy. The subordinate must respect his commander, believe that he is able to *"organize the battle in such a way as to complete the task with minimal losses."* What kind of trust could one speak of in an army in which a military leader of any rank could be turned into "camp dust" with one anonymous denunciation ... But the most paradoxical phenomenon of the Red Army should be recognized

that even the most severe repressions did not contribute one iota to the establishment of a reasonable order, discipline and minimal organization.

"Top secret. NPO Order No. 0049 of September 17, 1940

G.

... The audit found that in a number of headquarters, due to gross violations of the orders of NGOs, a number of crimes were committed regarding the accounting and storage of secret documents ...

1. The head of the headquarters of the Barabash fortified area, Major K. remained in this position for 10 days. The order at the headquarters of the Barabashsky UR is so ugly that none of the officers of the headquarters, including those on duty at the headquarters, took measures to close and seal the safe for 10 days. (It is necessary to clarify that in this case the words "of special importance" are not an epithet, but a term. According to the classification adopted in the Red Army, the category of "special importance" included the most secret documents from among the "top secret". The strictest instruction was developed for 15 pages on the procedure for compiling and storing documents of "special importance". In particular, these documents were not allowed to be transferred even to seniors in rank and position - only in person to the person to whom this document was addressed. The document had to be written personally by hand "in

a solid substrate that does not leave an imprint from the pen, "all drafts and blotting paper must be destroyed according to the act, the document was to be stored in a sealed safe located in a room with a sealed iron door and steel bars on the windows ...) 2. Headquarters 135 Rifle divisions,

upon departure to a new quartering place, mobilization documents were left untransferred and not guarded by anyone (in an open wooden cabinet in the storeroom of building materials).

3. In the units and formations of the Trans-Baikal Military District, a shortage of 59 secret and top secret documents was revealed ... "" Top secret. NKO

Order No. 0031 dated May 31, 1941 ... in the 23rd Aviation Division (Moscow Military District - M.S) until May 10 there was no aviation gasoline, as a result of which the aircraft were left unable to take to the air for several weeks ... Combat air bombs were thrown at the unloading platform of the railway, where they lay under the snow for a month and a half in the 24th Fighter

Aviation Division (Moscow Military District) since October 1940 and until recently not a single exercise on interaction with air defense systems has been conducted , not a single alarm was carried out with the departure of fighters, the control of fighters in the air from the air defense command post was not worked out at all ... "

"Top secret. Report of an employee of the Main Control Directorate of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Comrade. Semin addressed to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Comrade. Molotov dated July 9, 1940

... On June 17, we discovered the 235th separate construction company, which had been idle for 3 months, i.e. does not build anything and does not conduct any training with the fighters. A detailed acquaintance revealed that the headquarters of the Leningrad Military District did not know about the existence of this company and did not give it any tasks. On June 19, between Vyborg and Terioki, 300 m from the Vyborg highway, we also discovered the 1st airfield construction battalion (430 people), which also did nothing for 3 months ... Despite the fact that the battalion is located on the coast lakes, all Red Army soldiers, commanders and especially commissars. C. exceptionally dirty...

... At the railway stations of Leningrad, especially at Moskovsky and Finlyandsky, there are a lot of Red Army soldiers who have fallen behind their units (the war with Finland ended on March 13, i.e. four months before the date of this report. - M.S.) they go around dirty, unshaven and in winter uniforms ... "

Now, from a dry line of documents, let's move on to a very colorful written memoirs: "...

Preparations have begun. For my department, I picked up eleven stately fellows - Red Army soldiers from 175 to 180 centimeters tall. And they started ... Drilling, political studies, cleaning weapons and walking in the ranks along the surrounding roads, with songs ... And so every day, for a whole month ... Only one thing was embarrassing: compared to others, I owned command voice. It didn't work out: "Rrr - yas, prr - ya, ryas, a - a, three - and - and ..." Or "Pads - s - mays! .." No, I didn't succeed. And then I decided to act according to Demosthenes:

I regularly began to retire to the hills and scream there! It was to scream - with all my strength, loudly, stunned, then recite verses, shout out commands, individual words, sing After a brilliant victory in drill training, I had a

new concern. Now the commander had to appear every time "in all form." And this means - with a saber and with spurs. Another problem! Once I put on a saber and almost fell: it got tangled between my legs ... In order to keep the brand of the best combatant, I still had a lot of work to do myself, and every morning in my office I conscientiously trained ... "Dear reader, how are you think - what is it about? This is twice Hero of the Soviet

*Union, a wonderful fighter pilot, Air Marshal E.Ya. Savitsky enthusiastically tells in his memoirs about how in the spring of 1941, when there were only a few days left before the start of the war, he spent a whole month mastering this very - And...". And what position did the 28-year-old captain Savitsky hold in the spring of 1941? The answer is that he commanded **the 29th Fighter Air Division**. And who is that idiot - I can't find another word - who in the spring of 1941 distracts the commander of an aviation division to a competition in formation and song, and then also demands*

walk around the airfield in spurs and with a saber? This is the commander of the Far Eastern Front, the hero of the Civil War, Army General Apanasenko. They say one of the best colleagues of Budyonny and Tymoshenko ...

Of course, along with the idiots, there were talented, responsible commanders in the Red Army who "brutally worked on themselves" and used every hour for combat training of the units entrusted to them. If there were no such commanders, then the Germans would have reached from Brest to those Far Eastern hills, among which Captain Savitsky (not of his own free will, however,) shouted: "Pady - s - may!" In the previous chapters, it was repeatedly said about the 1st anti-tank artillery brigade, which, amid the general chaos and panicked retreat, held back the advance of German tanks towards Lutsk-Rivne. Opening the memoirs of Marshal K.S. Moskalenko, the former commander of the 1st PTAB, we discover that the brigade's successful combat operations were not the result of random luck - there was a commander in the brigade who prepared his subordinates not for a combat song contest, but for war:

"... The schedule should have provided for tight combat training: 8-10 hours a day, as well as 2-3 night classes a week ... Red Army soldiers and junior commanders saw their immediate superiors next to them from wake-up to lights-out. Commanders and political workers of all ranks taught by personal example, according to a very simple, but always justifying method, "do as I"...

... Classes in fire training were replaced by marches, field exercises with a large number of introductory exercises, tearing off trenches, changing firing positions and live firing. The training was carried out day and night, in any weather ... The soldiers and commanders were convinced of the power of their guns, that the armor of modern German tanks, in the event of an attack, would certainly break through our shells. The confidence in this, which appeared after the gun crews began to act in a coordinated manner, hitting targets on the firing ranges without missing, was of exceptional importance. After all, the first condition for success in battle is faith in one's own strength ... " And what is already

completely surprising is that armor-piercing 76-mm shells were also found in the Moskalenko brigade ("we were completely

*provided with shells, including armor-piercing ones"). As on another planet - in the tank divisions of the shock mechanized corps, there are no 76-mm armor-piercing shells at all, the generals write (and modern historians readily rewrite) pitiful reports about the absence of armor-piercing shells, and Moskalenko has shells, and targets, and shooting ranges ... It remains only to add that the formation of the 1st PTAB began in early May 1941, and the time for combat training was less than two months. And a hundred kilometers from the location of the 1st PTAB, other formations were deployed, the commanders of which later wrote in their reports: "... The *howitzer artillery**

regiment did not manage to fire a single gun from the guns ... conditions ... There were no teaching aids and exhibits ... Regimental artillery was sent to the regiments almost all out of order ... Anti-aircraft artillery had an extremely limited number of shells ... The artillery regiment was composed of 12 guns without panoramas ... The personnel of the motorcycle regiment not trained, never even fired..."

An incomprehensible feature of the totalitarian Stalinist regime turned out to be

the complete absence of a single, universal order - although the very word "totalitarian" implies unification and uniformity. Probably, we will not be much mistaken in assuming that disorder was universal and universal in Stalin's empire (and in the Red Army, as its most important component), only **in a number of happy cases, disturbed by order.** Moreover, this order was ensured not by the state system of power and administration, but by personal enthusiasm, personal conscientiousness, personal initiative of individual commanders.

At dawn on June 22, 1941, the war began. Not another "liberation campaign", but a real, big war. And it was here that Comrade Stalin had to face a stunning surprise - it turned out that many of his generals, colonels and lieutenant colonels did not even think about the fact that a professional military man should pay for the right to eat, drink and not work - pay with readiness to give up his life for the country that gave him these rights and privileges.

"... On June 24, in the Klevan region, we gathered a lot of unfortunate warriors, among whom there were many officers. Most of these people did not have weapons. To our shame, all of them, including the officers, were arguing the insignia. In one of these groups, an elderly man sitting under a pine tree, who in his appearance and demeanor did not at all resemble a soldier, caught my attention. A young nurse sat next to him. Turning to those sitting (sitting in front of the general. - M.S.), and there were at least a hundred of them, I ordered the officers to come up to me. Nobody moved. Raising my voice, I repeated the order a second, third time. Again, the answer was silence and stillness. Then, going up to the elderly "encirclement", he ordered him to get up. Then he asked what rank he was. The word "colonel" he squeezed out of himself with such indifference and at the same time with such impudent defiance that his appearance and tone literally blew me away. Pulling out a pistol, I was ready to shoot him right there, on the spot. Apathy and bravado instantly subsided from the colonel. Realizing how it could end, he fell to his knees and began to ask for mercy ... " This is an excerpt from the memoirs of Marshal Rokossovsky. On the third day of the war, a group of former commanders

of the 5th Army of the South-Western Front had already managed not only to throw down their weapons, but also to tear up the insignia. Is it worth generalizing individual shameful episodes? Of course not. You just need to familiarize yourself with the order No. 044 signed on July 26, 1941 by the commander of the North-Western Front, Lieutenant General Sobennikov:

"In a number of parts of the front, some commanders and political workers grossly violate the elementary foundations of the discipline of the Red Army. They do not comply with the established form of clothing, they do not have buttonholes, sleeve insignia and insignia on their overcoats and tunics ... I order:

- 1. The commanders and military commissars of formations and units oblige all commanders and political workers, under their personal responsibility, to sew buttonholes, sleeve insignia and insignia on overcoats and tunics within three days. The military commissar of the North-Western Front to provide formations and units with all the necessary emblems.*

- 2. Henceforth, all persons of the command staff who allow violations of the uniform, who have removed their insignia, should be considered as cowards and*

alarmists who dishonor the high rank of commander of the Red Army, and bring them to severe responsibility, up to and including bringing them to trial by

military tribunals. 3. Commanders and military commissars of formations and units to bring to the consciousness of all commanders and political workers the absolute inadmissibility of such violations of uniforms, and to create an intolerant attitude towards violators on the part of the commanding public" [195].

The order is unprecedented, not only in content, but also in form. In a normal, belligerent army, such an order should have given the specific names of those few bastards from among the command staff who were shot by a military tribunal for arranging insignia in a combat situation. But, as clearly follows from the order of the C-3 commander. f., the shameful phenomenon has reached such proportions that it is no longer possible to shoot all the "dishonest officers". It is not even possible to sew ripped buttonholes faster than in three days. Moreover, General Sobennikov in his order bashfully calls the actual preparation for desertion and surrender to the enemy just a "*violation of the uniform*"! In six months of 1941, **sixty-three generals** were taken prisoner . And in total during the war - 79 generals

(we did not include Generals A.B. Shister, M.O. Petrov, F.D. Rubtsov, I.A. Laskin, F.A. Semenovskiy, who were in captivity for only a few hours or days). Of course, captivity captivity strife. The author does not at all call for smearing everyone with the same tar. Many generals (Lukin, Karbyshev,

Tkachenko, Shepetov, Antyufeyev, Lyubovtsev, Melnikov and others, about twenty people in total) were captured by the enemy, wounded, in a helpless state. Many of those who were captured subsequently rejected the enemy's attempts to persuade them to cooperate and were shot or tortured by the Nazis. So generals Alaverdov, Ershakov, Karbyshev, Makarov, Nikitin, Novikov, Presnyakov, Romanov, Sotenskiy, Starostin, Tkachenko, Thor, Shepetov perished. Several people (generals Alekseev, Ogurtsov, Sysoev, Tsirulnikov) escaped from captivity, crossed the front line or joined partisan detachments [20, 124].

All this is true. Another part of the bitter truth is that most of the captured generals forgot that personal weapons were issued to them not only to drive subordinates into battle. Today's humanists, who call to enter into "the plight of defenseless generals," should remember that every commander who surrendered to the enemy thereby killed thousands of his soldiers, gave hundreds of thousands of civilians to the fascists to be torn to pieces. And the measure of responsibility for the defeat of the army and the ruin of the country for a mobilized collective farm peasant and a general showered with all the blessings of life (whom the state has endowed with the right to dispose of the life and death of thousands of such peasants) should, of course, be

different. For voluntary surrender and cooperation with the invaders after the war, **twenty-three former generals of the Red Army** were shot or hanged (and this is not counting those who received a full-fledged camp term for betrayal). Among them were commanders of a very high rank:

- Head of the Operations Department of the headquarters of the North-

- Western Front Trukhin; - Commander of the 2nd Shock Army Vlasov; - Chief of Staff of the 19th Army Malyshev; - Member of the Military Council of the 32nd Army Zhilenkov; - Commander of the 4th Rifle Corps (Western Front) Yegorov; - Commander of the 21st Rifle

- Corps (Western Front) Zakutny; - Commander of the 27th Rifle Corps

- (South-Western Front) Artemenko. Yes, ten people from among the executed generals were posthumously rehabilitated in the late 50s. But at the same time, one should not forget that the rehabilitation of the 50s was carried out according to the same rules as the repressions of the 30s. The list, without any objective examination, on the direct instructions of the "directive bodies" ... The fate of Lieutenant General M .F. Lukin.

An outstanding commander, a hero of the battles at Shepetovka, Smolensk and Vyazma, he was captured after a severe wound, in an unconscious state (his leg was amputated in a German hospital). During the special inspection, some facts of his "anti-Soviet activity" were revealed, but on August 31, 1945, in a report addressed to Stalin, the head of Smersh, Abakumov, wrote: "Considering that as a result of the injury he remained a cripple, he would consider it expedient to release and *secure undercover surveillance*" [124].

In the future, General Lukin slowly but surely began to turn into a poster model of an unbending hero who, once in German captivity, "contemptuously rejected all the promises and threats of the enemy." Lukin was awarded the Order of Lenin (1946), two Orders of the Red Banner (1946, 1947), and the Order of the Red Star (1967). He was awarded the title of "Honorary Citizen of Smolensk", and a street in this city was named after him. A legend appeared and ran from publication to publication about how Stalin told the general who returned from captivity: "Thank you for saving Moscow." Finally, in 1993, General Lukin was posthumously awarded the title Hero of Russia.

By this time, the interrogation protocol of December 14, 1941, which had long been known to Western historians, was translated into Russian and published, during which the captured General Lukin had such

conversations with the Germans: "... The Communists promised the peasants land, and the workers - *factories and factories, so the people supported them. Of course, this was a terrible mistake, since today the peasant, in comparison with the past, has nothing at all, and the average wage of a worker is 300-500 rubles a month, for which he cannot buy anything. When there is nothing to eat and there is a constant fear of the system, then, of course, the Russians would be very grateful for its destruction and*

getting rid of the Stalinist regime If an alternative Russian government is nevertheless created, many Russians will think about the following: first, an anti-Stalinist government will appear that will advocate for Russia, secondly, they will be able to believe that the Germans are really fighting only against the Bolshevik system, and not against Russia, and thirdly, they will see that they are on your side too

there are Russians who are not against Russia, but for Russia. Such a government can become a new hope for the people...

If Budyonny and Timoshenko lead the uprising, then perhaps a lot of blood will not be shed. But they, too, must be sure that there will be Russia and a Russian government... The new Russia does not have to be the same as the old one. It can even be without Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states (of course, it was not about granting independence, but about transferring these parts of the Stalinist empire under German occupation. - M.S.), being on good terms with Germany ... " [173].

Judging by his real actions, Comrade Stalin quickly realized that in the pre-war years he made a big mistake in the delicate matter of selecting, placing and exterminating cadres, and he tried very hard to correct himself. But how? Like a prisoner rummaging through the whole cell in the hope of finding a lost cigarette butt, he kept shuffling and shuffling the generals in the hope of finally finding someone who would perform a miracle, "turn stones into bread" and force the impoverished collective farmers to fight for "the native party and its great leader."

During the first four months of the war in the main strategic direction, the commander of the Western Front was changed **seven times** (Pavlov, Eremenko, Timoshenko, again Eremenko, again Timoshenko, Konev, Zhukov). The commander of the 21st Army (in the same western direction, over the same period) was changed six times (Gerasimenko, Kuznetsov F.I., Efremov, Gordov, another Kuznetsov V.I., again Gordov). Things were a little better with the neighbors of the 21st Army. Five commanders in the 20th Army (Remezov, Kurochkin, Lukin, Ershakov, Vlasov), four commanders in the 13th (Filatov, Remezov, Golubev, Gorodnyansky), three commanders were replaced during the summer-autumn of 1941 in the 19th and 22nd armies.

The commanders appeared and disappeared, not even having time to get acquainted with their new subordinates. Quite quickly, a certain universal rule developed in this leapfrog. It required neither acquaintance with subordinates, nor intelligence of the enemy, nor knowledge of military equipment. It completely replaced all the subtleties of tactics and operational art. It thundered and rumbled through all headquarters, trenches and dugouts.

AT ANY COST!

And in addition to this rule - a crafty self-justification: "War write everything off."

Everything was written off. Or even elevated to a model of "unbending courage and heroism." Like, for example, the infamous Nevsky Piglet. But this is really the brightest example. Only what?

In the autumn of 1941, after the blockade of Leningrad was established, a tiny foothold on the left (southern) bank of the Neva remained in our hands. A piece of land with an area of 2 by 3 km. Holding a bridgehead (even if at the cost of heavy losses) makes operational sense only if it is planned to start an offensive with large forces from its territory in the near future. Bridgehead in French means "a place for the army." On the "Nevsky Piglet" it was possible to deploy a rifle battalion, from the strength - a regiment. Yes, and to break through the encirclement was mainly a blow from the outside, and not from the starving city. "Nevsky Piglet" could not play (and actually did not play) any significant role in breaking the blockade in January 1943. Nevertheless, this "bridgehead" was ordered to be held. At any cost. They kept him. 400 consecutive days. German artillery shot through every meter of this huge mass grave. The total number of soldiers exterminated in that damned place is estimated by various researchers from 50 to 100 thousand people ... Let's be honest - sometimes even the top leadership of the Red Army expressed their indignation at this practice of wasting "human contingents". Stalin himself once demanded that his generals *"learn to fight with little bloodshed, as the Germans do"* (telegram to the command of the

South-Western direction of May 27, 1942). And even the bloody Marshal Zhukov (at that time - the commander of the Western Front) signed a directive on March 30, 1942, which

began with these words:

"The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and the Military Council of the Front receive numerous letters from Red Army soldiers, commanders and political workers, indicating a criminally negligent attitude towards saving the lives of Red Army infantrymen."

*Hundreds of examples are given in letters and stories when commanders of units and formations kill hundreds and thousands of people during attacks on undestroyed enemy defenses and undestroyed machine guns, on unsuppressed strongholds, with a poorly prepared offensive. These complaints **are certainly justified and reflect only a part** (emphasis added by me. - M.S.) of the existing frivolous attitude towards saving replenishment ... ” [117, p. 238]. Alas, there was little*

sense from such directives - primarily because Zhukov himself and his closest associates, both before and after issuing this directive, killed tens and hundreds of thousands of people "with a poorly prepared offensive." This is how Colonel A.K. Kononenko describes in his memoirs the visit of the Deputy Commander of the Western Front (i.e. Deputy Zhukov), General G.F. Zakharov to the headquarters of the legendary 1st Guards Cavalry Corps Below: “... Anger clouded his already not

very clear mind. Zakharov spoke, now raising his tone, then lowering it to a whisper with some kind of snake whistle, anger seethed and bubbled in him ... “I was sent here,” said Zakharov, “to make me complete the task by any means, and I will make you to fulfill it, even if I had to shoot half of your corps for this. It can only be about how to accomplish a task, not about what is needed to complete it. . . .

He called in turn the commanders of the regiments and divisions that attacked the highway, and, insulting them with the most selective curses, shouted: “If you don’t break through the highway today, I’ll shoot you!” He ordered the trial and immediate execution of five commanders whose fighters could not break through the highway... This man, who by mistake became a military leader, was by nature destined for the role of an executioner or a patient in a neuro-psychiatric clinic...” [163].

Communist propagandist historians managed to compose a very euphonious excuse for the Zhukovs and Zakharovs in advance: “The country was on the verge of destruction, the fate of the whole world was being decided, forced ruthlessness towards its soldiers was justified and necessary ...”

Sounds nice. Perhaps the time has come to ask a counter question - is it not this thoughtless ruthlessness of the command that pushed millions of soldiers to desert and surrender to the enemy? Didn't she put the country on the brink of death? And were not other, much more base motives hidden behind this preoccupation with the "fate of the world"? Let's take

two more documents. These are the orders of Marshals Konev and Zhukov, issued on the same day in April 1945. The country was no longer on the verge of death. She was on the threshold of her greatest triumph. Not only "the fate of the world", but also the post-war borders in Europe have already been drawn and agreed upon in Tehran and Yalta. In such an

environment, on April 20, Konev wrote an order: *"To the commanders of the 3rd and 4th Guards. tank armies. The troops of Marshal Zhukov, 10 km from the eastern outskirts of Berlin. I order you to be the*

first to break into Berlin tonight.

Execution to convey ... " Zhukov's order was a little more detailed: *" Commander of the 2nd Guards. tank army. Send one of the best brigades from each corps to Berlin and set them the task of breaking through to the outskirts of Berlin no later than 4 a.m. on April 21 at any cost and*

immediately reporting to Comrade Stalin and announcements in the press ... "[74] . Why send just one brigade per corps? And so it will be possible to "bring it to Comrade Stalin for a report" and go down in history as "the great marshal of victory." Why faster? Because the corps and the tank army as a whole are "burdened" with artillery, sapper units, and motorized infantry. They slow down traffic. Therefore, Zhukov deliberately sends the

two best brigades for slaughter. For what? For a "press announcement"? The soulless and ruthless expenditure of "manpower" was naturally combined with the wild, primitive style of relationships within the very commanding elite of the army. In the letter to Malenkov mentioned above, the commander of the 141st Rifle Division describes the order of "interaction" between the senior command staff and the commanders s

"... The commander or his chief of staff, or even the head of the operations department calls the division commander to the phone, he

chief of staff and shouts: "Bastard, blockhead ... fuck you ... why can't your regiment take the village, today I'll come and shoot you all." Of course, **none of them came to us for half a year** (emphasis mine. - M.S.), and they were shot by phone up to five times a day. In which army were or are there such relations? This leaven descends, there is a continuous cursing all around ... The commander of the 33rd Army even hit the commanders in the face, and for no reason ... Army events. Red

generals from among those whom "nature intended" to be the leader of a gang of thieves simply did not know another way of leadership: "... Eremenko, without asking about anything, began to reproach the Military Council for cowardice and betrayal of the Motherland. In response to my remarks that such heavy accusations

should not be thrown, Eremenko rushed at me with his fists and hit me several times in the face, threatening to shoot me. I declared that he could shoot, but he had no right to humiliate the dignity of a communist and a deputy of the Supreme Soviet. Then Eremenko took out a Mauser, but the intervention of Efremov prevented him from firing a shot. After that, he began to threaten Efremov with execution. Throughout this ugly scene, Eremenko hysterically shouted curses. Having cooled down somewhat, Eremenko

began to brag that, allegedly with Stalin's approval, he beat several corps commanders, and broke the head of one ... "

The quoted letter to Stalin was written on September 19, 1941. The ugly scene took place at the headquarters of the 13th Army, where the commander of the Bryansk Front had arrived. But, perhaps, Efremov and the author of the letter, a member of the Military Council of the Ganenko army, really were guilty in such a way that they deserved to be shot - albeit in a more legal form, i.e. through the tribunal? No, judging by further events, Eremenko immediately decided to make peace with the "traitors" he had exposed: "Sitting down at the table for dinner, Eremenko forced Efremov to drink vodka with him, and when the latter refused, he began to shout with curses that Efremov was in opposition to him and cannot be his deputy..." [117, p. 162].

For some reason, Stalin loved General Eremenko. He forgave him not only such trifles as the imposition of the mores of a criminal environment in the troops, but also the defeat of the Bryansk Front (the defeat that became the prologue to the encirclement and death of the Southwestern Front in the Kiev "sack"). In the future, it was Eremenko who became the general to whom Stalin came to the front for the first and only time in the entire war.

At the same time, in the autumn of 1941, Stalin responded to Commissar Ganenko's letter by issuing Order No. 0391 of October 4, 1941. The order was called "On the Facts of Replacing Educational Work with Repressions." Alas, not all orders of Comrade Stalin were carried out. Just two months later, on December 12, 1941, Marshal Timoshenko issued an order to the troops of the South-Western Front No. 0029 "On the facts of abuse of power, unauthorized executions and assault." The order states that not all commanders *"accepted for strict execution the orders of comrade. Stalin and drew practical conclusions from it."* Moreover, unauthorized executions *"were carried out in a drunken state, in full view of the Red Army masses and the local population..."* [68]. Every stick has two ends. The

attitude, rooted in the minds of many commanders, towards people as the cheapest "consumables" was quite adequately supplemented by the indifference of the Red Army to the statutory duty to protect the commander in battle. Unfortunately, we are not talking about individual shameful cases. The scale of the disappearance of commanders in the Red Army without a trace is staggering. In just four years of the war, only in the Ground Forces (i.e., excluding aviation commanders who did not return from a sortie) went missing: **163 division (brigade) commanders, 221 division (brigade) chief of staff, 1114 regiment commanders** [35, page 319]. Even by the beginning of the 1990s (half a century later), the burial places of forty-four generals of the Red

Army were not known [126]. This is not counting those who were shot or died in prisons and camps, not counting those who died in captivity! Forty-four generals - among them two dozen commanders of the corps and army level - shared the fate of ordinary soldiers who disappeared without a trace in the abyss of a terrible war.

There were many soldiers, in the Red Army the bill went into the millions. A soldier often fights alone and dies without witnesses. That is why the large number of unburied human soldiers, if not

justified is at least understandable. But how can a general, a corps or division commander go missing? The commander does not fight alone. The command and headquarters of the division had a strength (according to the state of April 1941) of 75 people. This is not counting the personnel of the political department, the tribunal and the commandant's platoon. There are even more people in the headquarters structures of the corps and the army. To what extent did the moral decay of the Red Army have to reach so that the dead generals remained abandoned in an open field, without a sign or a trace ...

"I DON'T KNOW ANOTHER SUCH COUNTRY..."

Even in countries with a stable, centuries-old democratic tradition, the entry into the world war caused the growth of authoritarian tendencies, significant restrictions on the rights and freedoms of citizens, and a weakening of the system of public control over the activities of state authorities. But in the Soviet Union it was exactly the opposite. The incredible fact is that it was with the start of the war that a real opportunity **for CHOICE opened up before millions of people.**

Until the fateful day of June 22, 1941, the Soviet people could not express their attitude to power either with a ballot (there was not even a faint semblance of fair elections in the USSR), or with a free word in an independent newspaper, or with their feet (an attempt to leave the "state of workers and peasants" was considered a crime and quite officially, in accordance with the letter of the Criminal Code, was called "escape").

In the summer of 1941, an unprecedented thing happened - before the eyes of the stunned population, the doors of the empty district committees and city committees were wide open, cars with panic-stricken running party and military "bosses", the plaster heads of the beloved "leader of the peoples", lying in the dust among other garbage - torn party cards and plump volumes of works of the classics of Marxism.

In these crazy days, everyone could make their own personal choice, a choice without fear of their "native party" and its "armed detachment" of glorious Chekists. No, there was no mass anti-Stalin uprising. There were no rallies, no "soldier committees". The silent majority (and in our country it was especially silent) of the Red Army soldiers silently threw down their rifles, silently crawled out of the hateful steel box of the tank, tore off their buttonholes and attached themselves to one of the huge columns of prisoners of war, who, accompanied by a dozen German escorts, wandered west. In each of the cities, towns and towns, in a few days of "anarchy" (between the moment of flight of the party authorities and the appearance of the German commandant's office, as a rule, 2-3 days passed), all

the shops. If this was a rebellion, then it was a senseless and pitiful rebellion, a

"rebellion on its knees." And could one expect anything else from people who had to go through what the Soviet people went through during the twenty

years of the cannibalistic power of the Bolsheviks? In the 20th century, in the era of aviation and radio, in a country with gigantic sown areas of the most fertile lands, the Bolsheviks revived cannibalism on a scale that the cannibals

of the Stone Age never dreamed of. This is not a metaphor, but a simple statement of fact. The ferocious cruelty of the Stalinist regime was in no way the result of the bad sadistic tendencies of the new leaders. Nothing like this. Their heads were cold, their hearts were made of stone, and they perfectly understood what they were doing and why. Even in relatively prosperous, productive years, the real marketability of the Russian peasant economy did not exceed 15-20%. This means that only five or six peasant households could feed one family of an urban worker. Of course, such proportions could not suit Comrade Stalin, who planned to create a huge army in the shortest possible time and equip it with the latest technology. And then the Bolshevik authorities deliberately and cold-bloodedly exchanged several million human lives for American tractor (tank) factories, for French aircraft engines, for German machine

tools. In 1930, in Ukraine, the state took 30% of the grain from the collective farms, in the North Caucasus - 38%. Next year - respectively 42 and 47%. The 1932 plan exceeded the 1931 figures by 32%. Moreover, when in the autumn of 1932 it became obvious that it was not possible to fulfill the procurement plan even through the complete confiscation of all grain (including seed funds), the furious Kremlin leaders demanded that the so-called "non-grain food resources" be confiscated in the collective farms that did not fulfill the grain procurement plan: lard, potatoes, onions,

beets, pickles [129, 131]. It is extremely doubtful that, given the then existing infrastructure for the transportation, storage and processing of agricultural products, at least a small part of the confiscated food ended up in factory canteens. In fact, it was "terror by hunger." Once again, the Bolsheviks remembered the testament of their leader and

("Teach them so that for several decades they would not even dare to think about any resistance.") And in Ukraine, on the Don, then in the Volga region and Kazakhstan, a mass death famine began. Holodomor. Fleeing from starvation, millions of peasants went, went, crawled to the cities. The government reacted quickly. On January 22, 1933, signed by Molotov and Stalin, a decree of the USSR government was issued:

"... The Central Committee and the Government have evidence that the mass exodus of peasants is organized by the enemies of the Soviet government, counter-revolutionaries and Polish agents ... To prohibit by all possible means the mass movement of the peasantry Ukraine and the North Caucasus to cities..." [129, p. 170]. The areas doomed to

starvation were cordoned off by troops. During the first month of this "quarantine", the OGPU reported about the detention of 219,460 people! The Italian consul in Kharkov reported to his superiors in Rome: *"... Within a week, a service*

was set up to catch abandoned children... At midnight they were taken by truck to the freight station on the Seversky Donets... there was a medical staff who carried out the sorting. Those who were not yet swollen from hunger and could survive were sent to barracks on Golodnaya Gora or to barns, where another 8,000 souls, mostly children, died on straw. The weak were sent on freight trains outside the city and left to die away from people. Upon the arrival of the wagons, all the dead were unloaded into large ditches dug in advance ... Every night in Kharkov, 250 corpses of those who died of starvation or typhus are collected. It has been noticed that a large number of them do not have a liver, from which pies are prepared

and sold on the market ... " [129] The Holodomor of 1933 had two fundamental differences

from the death famine of 1921. Firstly, it was an artificially organized pestilence, while the famine of 1921 was caused by "natural" causes (if only the ruin and decline of the national economy as a result of the war unleashed by the Bolsheviks can be considered a "natural" process). The harvest of 1932 was really poor, but it was not at all that the crop failure was the cause of the death of millions. Thus, in Ukraine alone, 36.5 million

centners of grain [123]. Based on the fact that two centners of grain per year is enough to feed one person, we come to the conclusion that Ukrainian state procurements alone were enough to provide 18 million hungry people with a loaf of bread. And how much grain simply rotted due to the lack of covered currents and elevators, how much was overtaken for vodka ...

Secondly, good grandfather

Lenin nevertheless allocated some money for the purchase of food abroad. Comrade Stalin **exported** 17.3 million centners of grain from the starving country in 1932 and 16.8 million centners in 1933 [132]. In the same year when pies with human flesh were baked in Kharkov, 47 thousand tons of meat and dairy products, 54 thousand tons of fish were exported from the USSR; the country of cannibals exported flour, sugar, sausages, sunflowers... [132]. The exact figures characterizing the scale of this unparalleled crime in history will never be

named. According to the most cautious calculations of the Soviet Ukrainian historian S. Kulchitsky (considerably higher figures are given in modern Ukraine), only in 1933 and only in Ukraine, **3-3.5 million people** died of starvation [131]. In those years, the population of Kazakhstan decreased **from 6 to 3 million people** [74]. In the Volga region, there was no "withdrawal of non-grain resources" (that is, potatoes and pickles were still left to the collective farmers). As a result, "only" **400,000 people** died of starvation there.

Human.

The main "enemy" in terms of numbers that the Bolsheviks fought was the economically independent (and therefore potentially dangerous for the dictatorial power) peasantry, which by 1917 accounted for four-fifths of the country's population. But the new government did not forget the townspeople either.

From February 1930 to December 1931, **more than 1.8 million people were deported from large cities**, the so-called "declassed elements and violators of the passport regime" [129]. Not only bourgeois professors and bourgeois engineers fell under this definition, not only homeless peasants who fled to the city from the collective farm famine, but also urban workers who were rounded up on the street without a passport in their pocket.

In archival documents, cases were noted when people with a passport were also caught - for the number in the report; an episode was noted when the head of the regional police department was deported from Moscow as a "violin of the passport regime", who had the imprudence to leave the house without a passport and service certificate in his pocket ...

Those deportees who were very lucky were waiting for forced labor at the "great construction sites of communism." So, in September 1932, 42,462 lived in Magnitogorsk

"special settler", which accounted for two-thirds of the population of this "city of dreams" sung in verse and prose. But such luck was not for everyone. "...

On April 20 and 30, 1932, two echelons of declassified elements, a total of 6144 people, were sent from Moscow and Leningrad to a labor settlement ... Arriving in Tomsk, this contingent was transferred to barges and taken to Nazino Island ... On the island turned out to have no tools, no buildings, no seeds, no crumbs of food ... On May 19, snow fell, the wind rose, and then frost ... People began to die. On the first day, a team of gravediggers was able to bury 295 corpses. Only on the fourth or fifth day did rye flour arrive on the island, which they began to distribute in several hundred grams. Having received flour, people ran to the water and, in hats, footcloths, jackets and trousers, bred a talker and ate it. At the same time, a huge part of them simply ate flour, fell and suffocated, dying of suffocation ... Soon cannibalism began on an alarming scale ... As a result, out of a total of 6,100 people who arrived from Tomsk, by August 20, 2,200 people remained alive .. ." [129, p. 162].

These are the lines from the report of the instructor of the Narym City Party Committee to the West Siberian Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. Judging by the final statistics, the nightmare on Nazino Island was not at all something out of the ordinary. During the first re-registration of "special settlers", carried out in January 1932, **a loss of 500 thousand people**

was revealed, who died or fled (to certain death) in the taiga. The mass repressions and the Holodomor of 1929-1933, along with simple, prosaic, "economic" tasks (to provide the growing industry with ultra-cheap labor and gratuitous agricultural products, to collect gold and currency for the purchase of Western technology), had as their goal the solution of one very complex

social problem. The new ruling class was filled from top to bottom with people who had personal experience. The experience of organizing uprisings, coups, partisan detachments, "Red Guards", etc. This experience and the presence of these people could not but disturb the party leadership. And only after dispossession and collectivization, Stalin and the company were able to breathe easy. Now they knew that for the "activists" who raked porridge out of the cauldron from the starving people, there was no way back to the robbed people and never will be. Bound by the mutual guarantee of immeasurable villainy, they could now only dutifully wander along the winding "party line". In January 1934, S. Ordzhonikidze,

beloved by our "liberals of the 60s", wrote to S.M. Kirov: *"The cadres who went through the situation of the 1932-33s and withstood it were tempered like steel. I think that with them it will be possible to build a State that history has not yet known.* Prophetic words. Deeply faithful. The history of Russia did not know this before. And such "cadres" who could daily unload children swollen from hunger into the bare steppe, in the old days, in old Russia, it was still necessary

search.

Unfortunately, neither the author of the letter nor its addressee survived until June 1941, and therefore did not see how these "hardened cadres" behaved in the face of an armed enemy.

In the meantime, in the conditions of a "peaceful respite" that dragged on for many years (which turned out to be much worse for the common people than an imperialist war), the new elite of the "proletarian state" did not waste time in

vain. *"I got married in June 1929 ... Fabulous life, fabulous ... An apartment on Manezhnaya Square, opposite the Kremlin. Six rooms... I went for dinner... We were brought in thermoses - it didn't get cold, it's close to the Kremlin, and our car had a green light everywhere... The dinners were delicious, the cooks were excellent, nine people were full of these dinners for two ... Half a kilo of butter and half a kilo of black caviar were always given for dinner ... Along with dinner, you could take gastronomy, sweets, alcohol ...: Vodka is red, yellow, white. In decanters... Wonderful chops..." [130, p. 154].*

These are my wife's memories. The wife of not even the boss, but only the son of a former member of the Politburo, by that time already disgraced

Kamenev. Kremlin chops, as a juicy metaphor for his future fate, he ate in a modest six-room apartment. The acting bosses, close to the Master, "decayed morally" on a much larger scale. So, on February 3, 1938, the Politburo adopted another resolution, which noted that *"a number of arrested conspirators (Rudzutak, Rozengolts, Antipov, Mezhlauk, Karakhan, Yagoda, etc.) built themselves grandiose dachas, palaces of 15–20 rooms, where they lived in luxury and spent people's money, thus demonstrating their complete everyday decay and rebirth.* Alas, Stalin's struggle with the "degenerates and degenerates" in terms of effectiveness

corresponded to attempts to pull himself out of the swamp by pulling his own hair. If not dachas, not palaces and not vodka "red, yellow, white, in decanters", then what else could he offer his associates? The dream of a world revolution was banished along with Trotsky, and even the Boss himself could not offer the idea of \u200b\u200buniversal equality and brotherhood to the cattle that had risen "from rags to riches". All he had to do was to shoot some "red boyars" to intimidate others. Many years later, the surviving children and grandchildren of the repressed chiefs inspired the gullible descendants with the idea that the main victims of the Great Massacre were the Bolsheviks of the "Leninist Guard", courageous military leaders and wise ministers. If only... In 1937-1938, **more than 1.5**

million people were arrested by the NKVD, of which 680,000 were shot, 115,000 died under torture during the "investigation" or died in prisons and camps [196]. Where was it possible to recruit so many generals, Bolsheviks of the "Leninist guard" and Chekists of the "Dzerzhinsky school"? Probably, we will not be much mistaken if we assume that for one "faithful Leninist" there were one hundred innocently ruined peasants, workers, engineers, doctors ... But the world is arranged in such a way that even a hundred thousand collective farmers cannot attract so much public attention, how much one heir of a member of the Politburo will attract. By

the beginning of 1939, the shooting of leading workers had declined sharply, but the repressions against workers and collective farmers were on the rise. The year 1940 was a record year for the number of convicts - 2.3 million people. It is noteworthy that in that year the "political" made up only 25-30% of the total number of repressed. Guided

normal human logic, one would assume that the remaining 70% were criminals. But it's not. Of course, there were also criminals, but the bulk of the Gulag prisoners were people who became victims of the criminal methods of leadership legalized by the Stalinist gang (it is important to note that 57% of all those in the Gulag had a prison term of less than 5 years). They imprisoned me for being 30 minutes late to the machine, for a drill broken due to inexperience (or due to unrealistic production rates), for being born in "liberated" Eastern Poland or Bessarabia, for the fact that a distant foreign relative stupidly sent a postcard. .. On the eve of the war, in January 1941, 1930 thousand convicts were kept in the camps

of the Gulag, another 462 thousand people were in prisons, there were more than 1200 thousand in the "special settlement". Total: 3.6 million. The total result of the pre-war "seven-year plan" is 6 million people who were behind bars in the period from 1934 to 1941 [129]. And when on July 3, 1941, clinking with a trembling jaw along the edge of a glass of water, Stalin turned to his "brothers and sisters," he knew that practically every one of the "citizens" humiliated, robbed, deceived by him had either a father, or a brother, or son or friend is shot, thrown into prison, exiled to Siberia for hard labor...

One of the most famous mantras used by communist "historians" to explain the defeat of the Red Army in the summer of 1941 was: "History has given us little time." It is not true. The ill-fated "history" gave the

Stalinist regime an unacceptably long time. For the destruction of all norms of morality and law, for the spiritual corruption of the peoples of Russia, he had two decades at his disposal. Beginning in the autumn of 1939, more and more "liberated territories" began to enter the Stalinist empire, and along with the territories, a multi-million, multi-ethnic local population. There was really little time for "educational work" with this population (the Great War was approaching every day), so the party and the NKVD worked in occupied Eastern Poland and the Baltic states with redoubled energy.

The well-known Chekist Sudoplatov, without the slightest embarrassment, writes in his memoirs:

"... In Lviv, the atmosphere was strikingly different from the state of affairs in the Soviet part of Ukraine. In Lvov, the Western capitalist way of life flourished, wholesale and retail trade was in the hands of private traders, who were soon to be liquidated ... " [162]. Eliminated quickly and decisively. Forced collectivization in

the countryside, extrajudicial requisition of private property in cities, the dissolution of all political, social, cultural and educational organizations, the persecution of believers (especially Catholics and Uniates associated with the West). The vigilance of the security officers reached the point that they were not too lazy to re-read thousands of writings of graduates of Polish schools - in order to identify "very smart and literate", whose families were the first to be loaded into freight cars leaving for Siberia ... [129].

According to the most minimal estimates, more than 400 thousand residents of the annexed territories were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan simply by decision of local "administrative bodies". Sometimes, presumably, as a matter of black humor, natives of Poland, who had never heard of Trotsky, were taken away from their homes on the basis of the Order of the NKVD of the USSR of July 30, 1937, as "members of the families of Trotskyists and saboteurs" [161]. In total, from September 1939 to February 1941, 92,500 people were arrested by the NKVD / NKGB in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus. Among them: 41 thousand Poles, 23 thousand Jews, 21 thousand Ukrainians, 7.5 thousand Belarusians [160]. As we see, there was no discrimination on the basis of nationality, everyone was imprisoned and shot.

In particular, in Western Belarus, the Chekists managed to identify some "Jewish-fascist organization of a pro-English (!!!) orientation ...". According to the same scenario,

but in an even shorter timeframe, the Sovietization of the Baltics took place. The only difference was that while in occupied Eastern Poland it was mainly the prosperous minority who suffered, in the Baltic countries the transition to Soviet money, Soviet prices and Soviet wages led to the impoverishment of the majority of workers, artisans, employees, and peasants.

In the weeks leading up to the war, the scale of repression increased significantly. By June 1941, the total number of those arrested in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus had grown to 107 thousand people. In the two-million population of Latvia, only on June 14-17, 1941, 15,171 people were repressed (arrested or deported), and in total in the three Baltic countries 14,467 people were arrested and 25,711 people were deported these days [155, 160, 161]. Note that these figures are also the minimum found in

the literature. As a result of such persistent "work with the population", the western regions of the USSR - the rear area of future military operations of the Red Army - began to turn into an active front, and even long before June 22, 1941.

The reports of the headquarters of the internal troops of the NKVD of the pre-war period speak of dozens of defeated (or being in "operational development") armed gangs, of almost constant skirmishes, sabotage, seizures of weapons and explosives. The situation was especially tense in the western regions of Ukraine, where partisan detachments of the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) operated, which had accumulated considerable combat experience over the years of the terrorist struggle against the Polish authorities. A careful reading of the memoirs of Soviet commanders shows that not a single memoir of the "liberators" of Western Ukraine can do without mentioning this topic. From the many examples, we will select two related to the same city

of Kovel. Hero of the Soviet Union, outstanding fighter pilot (467 sorties, 30 personally shot down enemy aircraft) F.F. Archipenko met the beginning of the war with the rank of junior lieutenant in the 17th Fighter Aviation Regiment. The regiment was based at the Lyubitov airfield in the Kovel region. In his memoirs, Arkhipenko

writes: "... I remember that before the war, commanders from other units often disappeared in those places, and, being outside the military territory, I had to be vigilant ... In the spring of 1941, on the instructions of the commissar in one of the villages near Kovel I happened to read a report dedicated to the day of the Red Army ... During the report, several shots were heard under the windows. It is possible that the villagers, dissatisfied with the Soviet regime (collective farms), de

to test in practice, in my person, the moral stamina of the Red Army. After the report,

there were dances, I also invited the girls and danced, although I was distracted, looking around so that they would not shoot ... The atmosphere around was rather tense, and the thought came that it would be nice to leave here as soon as possible while alive. Although I was left to spend the night, I insisted on leaving and left for Kovel in a cab, keeping the pistol ready in my bosom all the way ... ” [59, p. 25]. The commander of the 15th Rifle Corps, Colonel

Fedyuninsky, arrived in Kovel in April 1941. He describes the situation in the city

So:

“... The wives of commanders in Kovel, Lvov and Lutsk were almost openly told: “Wait! Soon the war will begin - the Germans will show you ... ”

The war began at

dawn on June 22. The first shots of the war that Colonel Fedyuninsky heard were the shots of Ukrainian nationalists: *“... Giving the necessary orders to the units, I heard several*

pistol shots that resounded through the quiet night streets. A little later, the duty officer at the headquarters reported that the car that he had sent for me was fired upon when returning to the headquarters, the driver was wounded ... Exactly the same story happened with the chief of staff, Major General Rogozny. He, like me, after a call from the duty officer, went to the headquarters on foot, and the car sent for him was also fired upon.

... In Kovel, where the headquarters of the corps remained for the time being, it was restless. Bandera's provocative attacks intensified. First in one, then in another area of the city, shooting broke out ... By the evening of June 28, the shooting, which had not subsided in the city itself in recent days, intensified. I was informed that Bandera had blown up the bridge across the Turya, cutting off our retreat...”

The fire of the rebellion flared up throughout Western Ukraine. And not only in the West. So, in the description of the military operations of the 32nd Panzer Division (4th MK) we read: *“By the evening of 6.7.41, the division approached Starokonstantinov, but it was not possible to enter the city, because there was panic and unrest in the city.”* Starokonstantinov is located in Proskurovskaya

(now Khmelnytsky) region. This is the "old Soviet" part of Ukraine. And even there, the "riots" turned out to be so strong that the commander of a tank (!!!) division did not dare to enter the city. At the same time, in the regional center itself, as Mikhailov, the head of the Political Propaganda Department of the Southwestern Front, Mikhailov reported, *"after the panic departure from the city of district and regional leaders, a power plant was blown up and a water supply system was destroyed. Our units that retreated to Proskurov were left without light and*

water..." [68]. The main events unfolded in Lvov, the historical center of Galicia. Fighting in the city began in the very first days of the war. Here is how the commissar of the 8th mechanized corps N.K. Popel describes the events of June 24:

"... The motorcycle regiment had to perform an unusual task for it - to fight in attics. It was there that the observation and command posts of enemy sabotage groups were equipped (thus, obeying internal self-censorship, Popel calls Bandera), their firing points and ammunition depots. The enemy controlled our every movement, but we did not see him, and it was not easy to get to him. The fights were fierce in nature ... It is impossible to understand where ours are, where the enemies are - the uniform is the same for everyone, Red Army. It was not easy to put things in order on the central highway of Lvov..." [105]. The situation that developed in the first days of the war in the Baltics cannot be called anything other than

a large-scale armed rebellion. The Latvian paramilitary organization "Aizsarg" (created back in 1919) by 1941 had up to 40 thousand people in its ranks. In

Lithuania, on November 17, 1940, the underground "Front of Lithuanian Activists" was established, whose combat groups by the spring of 1941 numbered 35,000 people. In a report dated May 21, 1941, German military intelligence stated with deep satisfaction: *"... Uprisings in the Baltic countries are prepared, and one can reliably rely on them. The underground insurrectionary movement is progressing in its*

development to such an extent that it causes certain difficulties to keep its members from premature actions..." [155]. Carefully manufactured by the joint efforts of the Stalinists and the Nazis, the "delayed action mine" exploded on June 22, 1941.

Before the advanced units of the Wehrmacht entered Kaunas, a certain "Lithuanian commandant's office" headed by the colonel of the former Lithuanian army Bobialis established control over the city. On June 23, the "Provisional Government" was formed in Kaunas, and on June 27, the restoration of the authorities and legislation of independent Lithuania was announced [26, p. 130]. One eyewitness testifies:

"... The Soviet leaders of Lithuania hurried to get away in cars first, and the police authorities followed them, thereby untying the hands of the counter-revolutionary gangs in Lithuania ... Kaunas and all of Lithuania in general were without civil authorities for several days. On June 23 and 24, the counter-revolution organized fighting squads, attracting even 5th grade schoolboys..." [155, p. 386].

It is more difficult to escape somewhere from Riga (the capital of Latvia) - the city stands on the shore of the sea bay. Perhaps that is why real street battles broke out in the city. In a document entitled "Brief Description of the Combat Operations of the 5th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the NKVD Troops", the situation in the city is described as follows:

"... Hostile elements caused panic in the rear of the army, demoralized the work of headquarters, government and Soviet institutions ... Enemies installed machine guns, machine guns, machine guns on the bell towers of churches, towers, attics and in the windows of houses and fired on the streets, buildings of the headquarters of the North-Western Front, the Central Committee of

the Communist Party of Latvia, a telegraph office, a railway station ...

"On the night of June 24, a group of rebels broke into the house where the workers of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia lived. The scale of this night battle in the capital can be judged by the fact that *"during the battle, 128 attackers were killed, 457 were taken prisoner"* [155, p. 404]. On June 28 (the troops of the German Army Group "North" occupied Riga only on June 30), the rebels

captured the radio station in Riga and announced the creation of a "Provisional Government of Latvia" ... [26, p. 207]. This was the end result of the "wise domestic and invariably peaceful foreign" policy of the Soviet state. **Annexed in 1939-1940. the territories of Eastern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Bessarabia turned into a trap for the Red Army.** Not only units of the active army fell into the trap, but the families of the Red Army commanders also found themselves in this deadly trap.

Commander families. This is another bloody - and carefully forgotten - page in the history of the beginning of the war. Among the chaos and confusion of the first days, the families of the commanding staff found themselves in cities and towns engulfed in "riots" of such force that even tank divisions (remember the 4th and 8th mechanized corps) could hardly escape from there. This tragedy was completely unprecedented - in no country that entered the war against Nazi Germany, there was nothing like it. Neither in France, nor in Belgium, nor in Poland, nor in Norway did they shoot at army commanders and their young children from all attics and doorways. Why they fired in the operational rear of the Red Army is understandable: in the Baltic states and in Western Ukraine, the war began more like a "small civil" than a "great patriotic war", and both sides in such a war acted beyond mercy. The question is different: how did the families of the command staff end up on the "liberated" in 1939-1940. territories?

With rare exceptions, the wives (and even more so the children) of the commanders of the Red Army were not natives of the western "annexed" lands. They arrived there together with their husbands-soldiers. Almost everyone in the east has parents, brothers, sisters. An organized, timely evacuation of the families of command personnel from the zone of future hostilities was quite possible. Moreover, there was a precedent for such a "separation" of families. On December 22, 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR issued Order No. 0362, according to which *"pilots, navigators and aircraft technicians, regardless of their military ranks, who have been in the Red Army for less than 4 years" were transferred to the barracks position.* Paragraph 7 of the order read: "...

The families of the flight and technical personnel transferred to the barracks should be withdrawn from the territory of military camps by February 1, 1941. The evicted families should be sent home or resettled to local urban and settlement housing stocks outside the location of the air unit..." [17, p. 202]. For family travel by

rail, free travel documents and a "allowance for settling in a new place" were issued in the amount of 2,000 to 3,500 rubles. (depending on the composition of the family). A lot of money, considering that the average salary of an industrial worker at that time was 350-400 rubles.

It is noteworthy that in the preamble of the order it was said: *"... In the current international situation, fraught with all sorts of surprises, the transition from a peaceful situation to a military one is only one step. Our aviation, which will be the first to take up battle with the enemy, must therefore be in a state of constant mobilization readiness ... The task of creating trained and fully prepared pilots for combat is incompatible with the modern situation, when the pilot is overburdened with family worries ... Nowhere in the world do such orders exist so that the pilots live in apartments with their families and that the aviation units are semi-civilian villages. To endure such a situation further means to jeopardize the combat education of our pilots, the strengthening of our aviation, the defense of our country..."* [17, p. 201]. Gold words. But if in December 1940 the

situation was assessed as "fraught with all sorts of surprises", and therefore, even in distant Siberia or Kazakhstan, pilots were transferred from under the family shelter to the barracks, and the family was "sent to their homeland" at state expense, then what prevented them from accepting similar measures in relation to all the families of the command staff who were in the western districts at a time when the German troops were already removing wire fences along the border? A rational answer

to this question cannot be found. Of course, Stalin's voluntary lawyers will also say in this case that the early evacuation of the families of the command staff was not carried out in order to "not give Hitler a reason to attack." Arguing on this topic is pointless and, frankly, tired. In May-June 1941, tens of thousands of wagons with people, tanks, guns, ammunition rushed westward, disrupting traffic schedules on all railways of the Soviet Union. What other "reasons" did Hitler need? The scale of the strategic deployment of the Red Army that had begun was so great that Stalin no longer tried to deny it. Instead, on June 13, 1941, in the famous TASS Report, a very clumsy, foolishly calculated attempt was made to give a reassuring explanation for Hitler : *like learning*

spares and checking the operation of the railway apparatus ... "

In such circumstances, the departure to the east of several thousand women and children would not add or

subtract anything. Most likely, the narcissistic arrogance of the Kremlin rulers manifested itself here (they planned to fight on a foreign land, to the thunder of orchestras) and the usual indifference to the fate and feelings of people for the Stalinist regime. Not only did the authorities themselves not organize the evacuation of families, they also actively prevented the manifestation of personal (or collective) initiative in this matter. The former head of the NKGB Department of Bialystok, Comrade Belchenko, writes in his memoirs: *"At the bureau of the regional party committee, we considered the decisions of some border district party committees on the expulsion from the CPSU (b) of those who began to send their families to our rear facilities" [62].*

Do I need to remind you what exclusion from the Party meant for the commander of the Red Army? And not only in Bialystok such crazy decisions were made. We open the book of General Sandalov (at the beginning of the war - the chief of staff of the 4th Army of the Western Front) and we read:

"... On June 19, 1941, an expanded plenum of the Brest Regional Committee of the Party was held ... At the plenum, the first secretary of the regional committee, comrade. Tupitsyn drew attention to the tension in the international situation and the increased threat of war. He called for increased vigilance... To the questions of the plenum participants whether it was possible to send families from Brest to the east, the secretary of the regional committee replied that this should not be done so as not to cause undesirable moods..." [79] .

However, after a few days, the party authorities blamed the army authorities for everything. The secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Latvia, J. Kalberzin, reported to Moscow that *"thanks to the unacceptable and incomprehensible behavior of the headquarters of the Baltic Special Military District, the families of party and Soviet workers were evacuated at the very last moment, when the "fifth column" had already come out and a rifle was going on the streets and*

machine-gun fire" [112]. And so it happened that on the morning of June 22, 1941, many thousands of commanders of the Red Army faced an inhuman choice: the choice between the duty of a man who is obliged to protect his women

and his children, and the duty of a military leader responsible for the combat capability of the unit entrusted to him. God judge them all, but it turned out that almost everywhere the commanders of the Red Army abandoned their soldiers and took up saving their wives and children. It is not for us to judge them, but how can we not understand the people whose families were under the threat of almost certain death - if not from a German bomb, then from a bullet of local nationalists. In this accursed time, in the absence of a

general and clear procedure for evacuation, every commander, every party functionary acted to the best of his conscience and his capabilities. Someone limited himself to "going to check the rear", put his wife and child on a freight train leaving to the east and returned to their military unit. Someone loaded into a car designed to transport ammunition, homemade junk and a ficus with a pot. The chairman of the Vitebsk City Council, Azarenka, as noted in the report of the military prosecutor, *"loaded a barrel of beer into the truck prepared by him in order to get drunk on the road, as he usually does in the city in his service ..."* [68].

"History has given us little time..." They did not have time to organize the evacuation of the families of the commanding staff. But they managed, despite the chaos and panic, the notorious "lack of ammunition and fuel", to carry out what was modestly called "evacuation of prisons" in the official reports of the NKVD.

On July 12, 1941, the head of the prison department of the NKVD of Ukraine, captain of state security A.F. Filippov reported to Moscow: (SARF f. 9413, on. 1, d. 23, sheets 147-153):

"... 2464 people left the prisons of the Lviv region in the 1st category ... All the prisoners who left in the 1st category were buried in pits dug in the cellars of prisons in the city of Zlochev - in the garden ... All documents and archives in prisons were burned, with the exception of prisoner registers, file cabinets and valuables. All these documents arrived in Kyiv..."

During the evacuation in two prisons in the cities of Sambir and Stryi, 1,101 people died in the 1st category ... On June 27, during the evacuation of the prison in the city of Sambir, 80 unburied corpses remained ...

From 3 prisons of the Stanislav region, 1000 people died in the 1st category. According to the statement of prison of Stanislav Gritsenko, the burial was made outside the prison in a dug out for this

pit targets. Part of the 1st category was buried on the territory of the prison in pit...

In the prison of Tarnopol, 560 people died in the 1st category. The burial was made in pits dug specially for this purpose, however, part (197 people) were buried in the basement of the NKGB, very shallowly buried ... In the prison in

Berezhany, 174 people died according to the 1st category. ... Of the total number of those who left in the 1st category, 20 people remained in the basement of the prison, who did not have time to be taken out, since the beginning. The regional department of the NKGB, Maksimov, categorically refused to provide vehicles for

the removal of corpses... 230 people left the Dubno prison in the 1st

category..." [198, 199]. The report also revealed individual omissions in the work, however, all the blame for them was placed on the "allied", i.e. to the local bodies of the NKGB (the prison department was part of the NKVD):

"... The local bodies of the NKGB for the most part assigned operations in the 1st category to prison workers, remaining on the sidelines themselves, and since this happened at the time of retreat under enemy fire, not everywhere prison workers were able to more carefully bury the corpses and disguise outwardly ..."

Buried really very carelessly. A terrible stench of corpses decomposing in the 30-degree heat hung over Lvov. It was completely impossible to work in the prison area without gas masks. Goebbels' office later published a whole book of letters from German soldiers, in which they talked about mutilated, quartered bodies nailed to the walls and found inside the Lvov prison. Then Soviet propaganda for five decades in a row vehemently denied the very fact of the massacre of prisoners ...

In the western regions of Belarus, they did not have time to carry out such a massive massacre - the Wehrmacht was advancing there too quickly. But east of Minsk, the NKVD continued to work. In the report of the military prosecutor of

Vitebsk we read: *"... State Security Sergeant, member of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Priemyshev on June 24 led 916 convicts and remand prisoners from the Glubek prison to the city of Vitebsk (estimate the number of prisoners in the prison of a provincial county town. - M.S.). On the way this Priem*

at different times, he shot 55 people in two steps, and in a place near Uma, during a raid by an enemy aircraft, he ordered the convoy, which was 67 people, to shoot the rest, and another 65 people were killed ... According to his statement, a total of 714 were shot prisoners. Based on personal files, we have established that among these prisoners more than 500 people were under investigation (that is, the guilt of these people, even according to Soviet laws, has not yet been proven.

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M.S.)" [68]. Of course, Hitler's propaganda appreciated and made the most of the generous "gift" that the glorious Chekists presented to the German invaders. The bloody remains were laid out in the squares, people were rounded up, who identified the mutilated bodies of their relatives and friends. Then the population was "explained" that the "Jewish commissars" were to blame for everything, and in an atmosphere of mass hysteria, the crowd, incited by provocateurs, began a Jewish pogrom. So, at the dug graves, one bloody dictatorship passed the "baton" of monstrous crimes to another ...

CATASTROPHE

Catastrophe. This word has repeatedly appeared on the pages of our narrative to refer to what happened to the Red Army in the summer of 1941. But in the history of World War II, this word has another meaning. Catastrophe or Holocaust (burnt offering in ancient Greek) - these terms are commonly used to refer to the death of most of the Jewish population of Europe as a result of the genocide organized by Nazi Germany. There are at least two reasons why the Holocaust chapter is a necessary part of this book. Firstly, it was precisely the defeat and disorderly retreat of the Red Army in the first weeks of the war that doomed almost 3 million Jews to death - half of all the victims of the Holocaust. Secondly, in the history of the Holocaust on Soviet soil, those characteristic features of the relationship between the people and the government, officious propaganda and the real state of public consciousness and morality, without taking into account which it is impossible to understand the causes of the unprecedented military catastrophe that befell the Soviet Union and its army, were extremely clearly manifested.

To begin with, some dry numbers and well-known facts. For several centuries, most of the entire Jewish people lived on the territory of the countries of Eastern Europe - Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Russia. By the time the Second World War began, 2.15 million Jews lived in the western regions of the Soviet Union, later occupied by German and Romanian troops. In the future, each new step of the "active foreign policy of the USSR" transferred more and more hundreds of thousands of Jews to the category of citizens of the Soviet Union: 250 thousand in Lithuania, 80 thousand in Latvia, 300 thousand in Bessarabia. The biggest "catch" took place in September 1939, when vast areas of Eastern Poland, where 1300 thousand Jews lived, were included in the Soviet Ukraine and Belarus. Thus, by June 22, 1941, **more than 4 million Jews were concentrated in the territory that was to become occupied.** In addition, in the border areas there were about 200-250 thousand Jewish refugees from the western regions of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania [159].

Later, after the war, communist historians did a simple arithmetic trick and stopped considering natives of Poland, the Baltic states, and Romania as Soviet citizens. In this way, they managed to more than halve the number of victims of the Holocaust on Soviet soil, "rewriting" the dead as victims of genocide in Poland, Romania, etc. This shameful cheating game not only contradicts all legal norms (at the time of the occupation, the future victims were citizens of the USSR), but also does not fit in at all with the many years of Soviet propaganda ranting that the "liberation campaigns" had as their goal precisely "protection of the population of Poland and the Baltic states from the horrors of the fascist occupation. Judging by the way the events of the summer of 1941 unfolded, the

leaders of that time, as well as later propagandists, were absolutely alien to the idea that the state bears any responsibility for the lives of its subjects. To this day, not a single document has been found, not a single evidence that the Soviet government was even looking for ways to save those of its citizens who, under the conditions of occupation, were waiting not for a difficult, bleak, hungry LIFE, but for cruel and inevitable DEATH. Headquarters Directive No. 45 of July 2, 1941 "On the procedure for the evacuation of the population

and material assets" contains many points and subparagraphs. In paragraph 9, it is prescribed *"do not evacuate sick horses, destroy them on the spot."* Further, after the sick horses, paragraph 13 says: *"The families of the military and leading civilian workers should be evacuated by the railway. transport"* [5, p. 43]. And not a single word about what to do with families (as a rule, large families) of Jews. Of course, to take out in a matter of days (the Red Army retreated from

Lithuania, most of Belarus, the western regions of Ukraine in the first 7-10 days of the war) two million people was technically impossible. The statement of this indisputable fact should not belittle the significance of the fact that **the authorities did not make the slightest attempt** to take out at least someone, even several thousand children. Moreover, in the first days, the most critical for the fate of the Jewish population of the border regions, on the "old border" (i.e., the Soviet-Polish border of 1939), **frontier posts continued to operate,**

who detained everyone who did not have a special exit permit or party card! [159, p. 268]. This absurd practice of

evacuating the population only on the basis of "exit permits" continued until the wave of the German offensive swept away the frontier posts on the "old border". It is difficult to explain all this with arguments of sound logic. People are the most valuable "resource", which the enemy has no reason to leave. By the way, during the "second retreat" (in the summer of 1942), evacuation was seen as a patriotic duty of the Soviet people. Most likely, at the beginning of the war, the eternal bureaucratic instinct simply worked: "grab and not let go." Any independent activity, especially such a significant one as a change of residence, without a special sanction from the authorities, seemed to be a violation of all norms and principles.

If it was difficult to save at least part of the Jewish population, and it was almost impossible to take out all of them, then it was quite simple to notify people of the mortal danger threatening them. Much easier and cheaper than destroying sick horses. A black "plate" of a loudspeaker hung on every village street, not to mention the cities. Newspapers and leaflets were published and poured in millions of copies. Something, but the Soviet government was able to instruct the population "on the true path", and the infrastructure necessary for this was created long before the war. But nothing was done. Absolutely nothing. Even in cases where an act of mass extermination of Jews was clearly described, newspaper articles used either general formulations ("the Nazis drove several thousand peaceful Soviet citizens to the anti-tank ditch ...") or ideologically advantageous clichés: "advanced workers", "Komsomol members", "parents and wives of the Red Army.

The first large-scale information campaign took place only on August 24, 1941. On that day, a "radio meeting of the Jewish community" was broadcast on the All-Union Radio. The report on the rally was also placed in all the central newspapers. The main objective of the event was to activate the Jewish communities of England and the USA, which was supposed to push the ruling circles of these countries to provide more effective assistance to the USSR. But, regardless of the intention of the organizers, this radio program contributed to informing the Jews of the Soviet Union.

Union about the threat looming over them. Unfortunately, the information is extremely late. By that time, the Baltic States, Belarus, Moldova, most of the Left-Bank Ukraine, the western regions of the Smolensk region were already occupied.

As for the official statements of the country's leadership, the first mention of the brutal reprisals against the Jewish population appeared in the note of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR dated January 6, 1942. In this document, a whole paragraph was devoted to the tragedy of Babi Yar and the death of 52 thousand Jews in Kiev. Finally, on December 19, 1942, a special Statement of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs "The Implementation by the Hitlerite Authorities of Plans for the Extermination of the Jewish Population of Europe" was published. True, by the time this Statement was issued, there was already no one to notify. In December 1942, the last 250,000 prisoners lived out their last days in ghettos and concentration camps in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union [159]. It is noteworthy that the Statement, in fact summing up the implementation of the "plans of the Hitlerite

authorities", did not at all call on local residents, partisan commanders to save those who could still be saved... - a pair of legs There were no more horses ("the undeniable successes of Stalinist collectivization"), there were no personal vehicles yet. Nevertheless, about 1 million (according to other sources - up to 1.5 million) Jews were able to overtake the advancing German

army. Mostly residents of the RSFSR and the eastern regions of Ukraine were saved - they had more time, moreover, many were taken out in an organized manner as workers of evacuated industrial enterprises. **About 3 million people remained in the occupied territory**, including: 220 thousand in Lithuania, 620 thousand in Western and 180 thousand in Eastern Belarus, 250 thousand in Moldova, 1500 thousand in Ukraine [159].

Four "Einsatzgruppen" SS with a total number of about 3 thousand people were sent to the territory of the USSR to exterminate the Jews. Including - at least 600 technical personnel: drivers, mechanics, radio operators, translators. In order to find, identify and destroy 3 million Jews (who, at the same time,

hid in every possible way, forged documents, hid in forests and swamps), the Nazis would probably need just the thousand years that the Third Reich hoped to exist. In other words, both the pace and the very possibility of implementing the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" depended to a large extent on the attitude of the local residents towards this matter. The history of the

Holocaust provides examples of a wide variety of scenarios. Thus, Finland, Spain, and Bulgaria completely refused to participate in the implementation of Hitler's plans for genocide - countries that were considered allies of Nazi Germany. In Italy and Hungary, the mass extermination of Jews began only after the occupation of these countries by the German army (respectively, in 1943-1944). The authorities and people of Denmark saved almost the entire Jewish community of their country by transporting 8,000 people by sea to neutral Sweden.

On the eve of the war, 350,000 Jews lived in defeated France. About 100 thousand people were sheltered by local residents and Catholic monasteries, another 40-50 thousand Jews were secretly transported to Spain and Switzerland. 83,000 people died - less than one-fourth of the pre-war Jewish population of France. A third of the Jewish communities of the Czech Republic and Serbia were able to survive the occupation. One in four Jews from Belgium and the Netherlands survived, a remarkable fact, given the size of these countries, the population density, the absence of large forests, and the full four years of German occupation.

In the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, the "proportion of destruction" everywhere exceeded 90%. The Holocaust in the Baltics was unprecedented in terms of pace, cruelty, and the degree of involvement of the local population - up to 96% of the Jews who remained in the occupation were destroyed there. In total , **2,825,000 Soviet Jews perished at the hands of the invaders and their local accomplices** [159, pp. 43, 96,

167, 206]. Most of the survivors are not those rescued by local residents, but the prisoners of the ghetto in the Romanian zone of occupation (the so-called Transnistria, i.e. the territory of Ukraine between the Dniester and the Southern Bug). At the beginning of the war, the extermination of Jews by the Romanian troops and the gendarmerie was massive and extremely savage in nature (for example, on October 23, 1941, in the pre

19 thousand people were burned alive in Odessa). But after the defeat of the fascist troops near Stalingrad, the Romanian leadership stopped the massacres, and then even allowed the delivery of food aid from international organizations to the ghetto.

As for the zone of German occupation, almost all the Jews who did not have time to evacuate died there. Even if we had

no other documents and memories at our disposal, the highest "efficiency" and the totality of the genocide achieved on Soviet soil alone irrefutably testifies that the SS executioners found here the necessary number of accomplices from the local population. Unfortunately, there are documents, facts, and miraculously surviving witnesses of such atrocities that simply do not fit into human consciousness. It was the executioners and fanatics from among the former Soviet citizens who brought to the cause of the "final solution of the Jewish question" the passion that the servants of the soulless machine of the Nazi state were deprived of.

On July 4, 1941, Latvian nationalists in Riga herded 500 people into the synagogue and burned them alive; in Kaunas, 4,000 Jews were beaten with crowbars or drowned; bulgaria burned alive 1600 Jews. Often, local "activists" were in a hurry to take on such "work", which the Germans themselves refused at the initial stage of the war. Thus, the first mass execution of young Jewish children in Ukraine was carried out on August 19 near Bila Tserkva by the local police. On September 6, 1941, the SS Sonderkommando, having destroyed 1,100 adult Jews in Radomyshl, instructed the Ukrainian police to kill 561 children. Sadistic "enthusiasm" was so great and contagious that on September 24, the commander of Army Group South, Field Marshal Rundstedt, issued an order forbidding Wehrmacht soldiers "to participate in

excesses of the local population ...".

But even these horrific events should not be seen as the main differences in the practice of carrying out the Holocaust on Soviet soil and in Western Europe. It is fundamentally important to note that **in the West the genocide of the Jews was concealed, while in the East it was persistently demonstrated.** Why?

The creation and operation of any factory - including the "factory of death" - requires money. Tall chimneys of crematoria had to be built, furnaces had to be provided with fuel, gas chambers had to be provided with expensive chemicals. The delivery of hundreds of thousands of Jews from different parts of occupied Europe to Auschwitz and Majdanek distracted steam locomotives, wagons, and coal reserves from meeting the needs of the front. Thus, in the summer of 1944, the Germans took 445,000 Jews of Hungary to Auschwitz. This is a huge additional load on the railways, and Germany went for it, despite the fact that the military situation that summer was not much better for the Wehrmacht than for the Red Army in the summer of 1941! And, only the Jews of the Soviet Union (with a few rare exceptions) were not taken anywhere far, they were destroyed right at their place of residence, openly, in front of the eyes of the population and with the involvement of everyone.

One of the possible explanations for this paradox, strange at first glance, can be considered that for Western Europe the Nazis could not come up with any explanation that satisfies public opinion, the expediency of the genocide of the Jews. The thesis that Jews are "racially inferior subhumans" could only frighten and alert a Frenchman or a Hungarian ("won't they announce us next?"). Well, the old anger about the fact that "the Jews crucified Christ" no longer worked

in civilized Europe of the 20th century. As a result, in order not to cause undesirable sentiments for them among the

population of Western Europe, the Nazis went on huge, extremely burdensome in a big war, transportation costs. On the Eastern Front, things were completely different. "Beat the Jewish political officer, his face

asks for a brick." The text of this famous leaflet, which rained down from the sky in huge quantities on the columns of the retreating Soviet troops, expressed the very essence of the matter in a simple, accessible, memorable form. Not just a "Jew" and not just a "political officer", but precisely a "Jew-political officer". A small dash (against all the rules of arithmetic) has become a sign not of subtraction, and not even of addition, but of multiplication of hatred. Comrade Ponomarenko, secretary of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Communist Party, reported to Stalin on the fourth day of the war: *"All their (Germans. - M.S.) agitation, oral and*

written, goes under the flag of the fight against the Jews and the Communists, which is interpreted as synonyms" [112].

It was precisely to prove the identity of the concepts of "Jew and Commissar", "Jews and Soviet power", "Jews and the NKVD" that the entire most powerful propaganda apparatus of the Third Reich was directed. In millions of leaflets, in thousands of newspaper publications (and many newspapers in Russian, Ukrainian and other languages were published in the occupied territories), in countless oral speeches, the idea was carried out that it was the Jews who were the main active force of the communist regime, that it was they who unleashed the "red terror", that it was and only the Jews who participated in establishing the "Soviet new order" in the annexed territories of Eastern Poland and the Baltic states.

In parentheses, we note that, not to mention the absolute legal and moral unacceptability of the thesis of the "collective criminal responsibility" of an entire people for crimes committed by individuals, the very statement about the "dominance of the Jews" in the Soviet authorities and the NKVD by the end of the 30s did not correspond to the real facts. Yes, indeed, during the years of the revolution and the Civil War (1917-1921), the share of Jews in the leadership of left-wing extremist organizations (Bolsheviks, Social Revolutionaries, anarchists) was disproportionately large. The "cadres" who survived in the fire of the Civil War then moved to leading positions in the party and Soviet apparatus, in the organs of the Cheka - the GPU. After the Great Terror of 1937-1938, the situation changed radically.

In 1934, 37% of the top leadership of the NKVD (the central apparatus of the people's commissariat and heads of regional and republican departments) were Jews [140, p. 495]. Of the 37 leaders of the NKVD, who in 1935 received the highest personal titles of "commissar of state security", respectively, 1, 2 and 3 ranks, there were 20 Jews (54%). But by 1941, of these 37 "Chekist generals", only two survived! [196, pp. 19, 395]. The new cadres, who came in the amount of 74 people to the central apparatus of the NKVD in the spring and summer of 1938 (that is, still under Yezhov), by 73% (54 people) already consisted of persons of Slavic nationalities (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians). Then most of the "Ezhov's nominees" (85%) were physically destroyed after the arrival of a new leadership in the late autumn of 1938

NKVD headed by L. Beria [196, pp. 348, 400]. As of July 1, 1939, the share of Jews in the top leadership of the NKVD had dropped to 4% [140, p. 495]. New, very young (30-35 years old) cadres, 80% consisting of persons of Slavic nationalities, came to the leadership of the punitive system. There is no need to talk

about the "surplus" of Jews in administrative apparatus of the "liberated" territories.

So, in the Belostok region (Western Belarus), by the middle of 1940, 11,598 people were appointed to large and small positions in the Soviet and party apparatus, including 5,195 Poles, 3,214 Belarusians, 2,431 Jews, 613 Russians (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 22, file 230, sheet 69). In the Drohobych region (Western Ukraine), 3885 Ukrainians, 1920 Russians, 336 Jews, 245 Poles were appointed to administrative positions (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 22, file 3108, fol. 38) [197]. Thus, in Bialystok, the share of Jews in the administrative bodies is somewhat smaller, and in Drohobych it is much less than their share in the total population (in the cities and towns of Eastern Poland, Jews accounted for 25-35% of the population). Jews were arrested much more "willingly" than they were assigned to "warm places" - as already noted above, from September 1939 to February 1941 in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus, 23 thousand Jews, 21 thousand Ukrainians, 7 5 thousand Belarusians. Of course, fascist propaganda turned not to figures and facts, but to old irrational anti-Semitic prejudices, coupled with a hot

wave of hatred for the communist government and its punitive apparatus. The public humiliation and then brutal extermination of the Jews, according to the plan of the Nazi occupiers, was supposed to incite hatred for everything that was connected with the Soviet government, to involve the population of the occupied regions in active cooperation with the Nazis. And if the party bosses who rushed off in comfortable cars were far and inaccessible, then defenseless Jewish families with many children were nearby, and it was possible to take out the accumulated anger and

despair.

The fact that the vast majority of the victims of the genocide had nothing to do with the punitive system of the NKVD, and even outwardly did not at all resemble the "fattening bosses", did not bother either the Nazis or

their accomplices, nor (which is the most important and tragic) ordinary inhabitants. Soviet society was long ago and carefully psychologically prepared for such phenomena as mass extrajudicial terror, punishment without crime, collective responsibility of entire groups of the population for the crimes (often fictional) of individuals. Did the so-called "fists" look like the "exploiters" lying on the stoves? And how many so-called "Trotskyists" have seen a living Trotsky, or even read any of his books? And the enrollment of entire peoples in the category of "suspicious elements" (which found its expression in the arrests and deportations of Koreans, Chinese, Poles, Latvians, Finns) was no longer a curiosity for Soviet people.

Let's be fair - among the bloody madness there were people capable of the highest heroism, courage, self-sacrifice. Despite the brutal terror of the occupiers (execution, and the execution of the whole family, was supposed not only for harboring Jews, but also for not reporting!), thousands of people of all nationalities came to the aid of the doomed. The Israeli memorial and research center Yad Vashem has established more than 18,000 names of people who saved Jews during the years of the genocide. **Among them are 5,500 Poles, 1,609 Ukrainians, 488 Lithuanians, 440 Belarusians** (it should be clarified that in this context, the terms "Polish", "Ukrainian" indicate the place of action rather than the specific nationality of the saviors).

In the Belarusian town of Breslav, 60 families were involved in saving Jews - ordinary peasants, doctors, Orthodox and Catholic priests. In the hero city of Brest, out of 25,000 Jews, only 19 survived. Six of them were saved by the family of Polina Makarenko, hiding in their house. A resident of Uman, a veteran and invalid of the First World War, Alexander Dyatlov, hid 12 Jews in his house. One of the neighbors informed the Germans. The entire Dyatlov family was shot, including three children. During the three years of occupation, the educators of orphanages in Minsk hid more than 500 Jewish children from the punishers. 12 children were saved by the head of orphanage No. 2 in Kyiv. Wehrmacht captain Willy Schulz took 26 people out of the Minsk ghetto in a truck. The burgomaster of the city of Kremenchug, Sinitsa-Verkhovsky, was shot in November 1941 for issuing false identity cards to Jews. Peasants of Rakovets village (Western Ukraine)

sheltered 33 Jewish families. In the village of Kuyalnik (Odessa region), collective farmer V.M. Ivanov saved 25 people... [159].

Strictly speaking, the executioners and their active accomplices made up at most 2-3% of the total adult population of the occupied regions of the USSR. We should not forget that normal people were deprived of the opportunity to express even a moral condemnation to them - the punishers were armed and relied on the support of the entire military machine of Nazi Germany. However, it would be inappropriate and false simplification of the real situation to say that the position of the majority of the population was neutral. And the point is not only that the lack of simple human sympathy (especially ridicule and mockery on the part of recent neighbors, colleagues, students) literally stunned the Jews, deprived many of them of the will to live and resist. A significant part of the population, although not directly participating in the murders, hurried to occupy the "vacated living space", willingly profited from the robbery of Jewish property, from looting "trade", when family jewels were exchanged for a piece of bread. There were even people of a new profession - the so-called "shmidtsovniki". This was the name given to the hunters for the Jews, who, having discovered those hiding, extorted a ransom from them for not informing them. Then, having taken everything that was possible from the victim ("having melted the lard"), they handed over the Jews to the occupying authorities [159, p. 295]. A vivid illustration of everything that has been said can be such an excerpt from a lengthy report

by K.Yu. Matte - one of the leaders of the communist underground in the city of Mogilev:

"... In the first months of the occupation, the Germans physically destroyed all the Jews. This fact caused a lot of different arguments (note - not hatred for the executioners, not compassion for the victims, but "various arguments." - M.S.). The most reactionary part of the population, relatively small, fully justified this atrocity and assisted them in this. The main philistine part did not agree with such a cruel reprisal, but argued that the Jews themselves are to blame for the fact that everyone hates them, but it would be enough to restrict them economically and politically ...

... The rest of the population, Soviet-minded, sympathized and helped the Jews in many ways, but was very indignant

the passivity of the Jews, since they gave themselves to the slaughter without making even a single spontaneous attempt to act against the Germans in the city or to join the partisans en masse... good official places, they established mutual responsibility among themselves... "And now the Jews also expect help from the Russian Ivanovs, but they themselves do nothing," they said...

... Considering the mood of the population, it was impossible to openly and directly defend the Jews in propaganda work, since this, of course, could cause a negative attitude (I emphasized. - M.S.) *to our leaflets even from our Soviet-minded people, or people close to us..." [158].* The text is amazing. Judging by it, the inhabitants of Mogilev perceive what is happening as a war between Jews and Germans. A minority actively takes the side of the Germans, the bulk of the inhabitants quietly gloat ("the Jews themselves are to blame"). The best people are very indignant at the "passivity of the Jews", but at the same time they themselves sit in the city and do not plan to "mass departure to the partisans". The mere thought that the "Russian Ivan" should get into this fight, which **is alien to him (!!!)**, causes extreme irritation among these wonderful "Soviet-minded" people. It is worth noting that the occupation posters posted in Mogilev in the spring of 1943 promised 5 packs of shag for one extradited Jew [159]. Cheap, even in the hungry wartime cheap. But, apparently, the inhabitants of the city did not even try *to "get a job in more profitable places"*, many were quite satisfied with the shag ...

BARREL AND HOOPS

For many years, any discussion of the similarities between the Stalinist and Hitler regimes was an absolutely taboo topic. Even in a few color films "about the war" it was impossible to see the fascist flag in its real, i.e. red, color. Then, from the end of the 80s, historians and publicists burst through: they jumped and listed everything, right down to the common song that in one country was sung to the words "higher and higher and higher", and in another - "Mein Fuhrer , mein führer, mein führer ... ". Now is the time to recall and discuss the two most

important differences in the structure of these totalitarian despotisms. Hitler came to power on the wave of a nationalist upsurge

(organized by him). "Germany is above all" - this is the main slogan, which in the cause of Hitler's ascent to power fulfilled the role that Lenin's brilliant dictum "rob the loot" played in our country. The Nazis categorically did not allow to rob their own, half-blooded Germans. They sought to rally their German nation, while the Bolsheviks were only concerned with inciting workers against employers, soldiers against officers, farm laborers against peasants, leftists against rightists, rightists against

left...

The Germans did not have to endure either "dispossession" or exposure of millions of "pests". All the charge of mass hatred necessary for the functioning of the totalitarian dictatorship was directed not inward, but outward - at the external enemies of Germany. And the result exceeded all expectations. Until the very last days of the war, the German soldier was ready to shed blood to save the Fatherland from the "Asian hordes of Bolsheviks" and "mercenaries of the Jewish plutocracy of the West." Against this background, the ideology and practice

of Bolshevism look like rare idiocy. Recognizing the inevitability (moreover, the desirability) of more and more world and European wars, Lenin and his henchmen declared patriotism a dangerous and harmful survival of the petty-bourgeois consciousness. During the First World War (which official Russian propaganda then called

“Second Patriotic War”), they called for “sticking a bayonet into the ground” and making peace with enemy soldiers. Having seized power, the Bolsheviks even expelled any traces of something national from the name of their army. The army became neither "Russian", nor "Russian", and not even "Soviet" (by the name of the state). The army was called "workers' and peasants", the soldier became the "Red Army", all the enemies were called "whites": White Poles, White Chinese, White Finns...

Lenin can still be understood. Having spent the best years of his life in emigrant coffee houses in Paris and Zurich, in a narrow circle of sectarian fanatics, he broke away from the realities of Russian life and seriously believed that the Russian peasant would go to war for the sake of the "triumph of the World Revolution." But Comrade Stalin - an unprincipled pragmatist and a cold realist - how could he go that way? Yes, of course, then Stalin came to his senses, dispersed the Comintern, took out the bright images of the “tsarist generals” from the storerooms, and Alexander Nevsky took the place of the founder of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, in propaganda ... But all this will be later.

And in war, being late is deadly. Even more significant for the topic of our study another difference between Bolshevik and Fascist dictatorships.

By the time the Soviet-German war began, Hitler had fulfilled most of his promises. Stalin and the Bolsheviks cheated the simpletons who trusted them in almost everything. Hitler

united all Germans in one state, gave every worker a job and a decent salary, created an impressive system of social support for motherhood and childhood, expanded the territory of the Reich many times over, led the German army under the triumphal arch of Paris, did not offend any of those representatives of the old German elite who agreed work with the new government. Hitler was not afraid to show the German workers real pictures of the life of Stalin's "state of workers and peasants." Speaking with a radio address to the nation on October 3, 1941, he could say: *“Our soldiers have come to the lands that have been under Bolshevik rule for 25 years. Those of the soldiers who still had communist ideas in their hearts or minds will return home healed in the literal sense of the word... They walked through the streets of this "paradise". This is exclusively a factory for the production of weapons against Europe, built at the expense of the living standards of citizens ...*

"

The Bolsheviks fulfilled only one of their many promises: they promised to cut all the "gentlemen" to the root - and cut them out. And with a lot of overkill. Everything else was a complete sham.

To share the expropriated from the expropriators, in other words, the loot, they did not share with anyone. Despite the astronomical sums seized from the royal family, the aristocracy, the church, private capital, the real standard of living of most of the population of the richest country in the world remained as miserable as it was before the revolution. Instead of the promised equality, a new nobility

appeared, who flew planes in the country of beggars and cannibals, rode varnished Packards, lived on the estates of the Grand Dukes, rested on imperial beaches, in a word - enjoyed life according to the standards of American millionaires.

Promises to relocate workers' families from barracks to palaces ended up turning the few surviving palaces into overcrowded, filthy communal bunkhouses. Promises to give the "factories to the workers" ended with

the fact that the former civilian workers were turned into serfs, deprived even of the right to quit the factory, where they worked in three shifts for miserable pennies, but received a full-fledged camp term for half an hour being late.

The landed estates seized by the peasants in 1917 were taken away from them. Together with all the acquired labor and then property, together with freedom, and for many, together with life. The poverty in which a Smolensk or Novgorod collective farmer vegetated shocked the German soldiers, who simply could not believe that people in Europe could live like this. With the rarest exceptions, all

the military, engineers, economists, diplomats of old Russia, who voluntarily entered the service of the Bolsheviks, did not live until June 1941 - they were shot or "erased into camp dust."

So what kind of propaganda could make up for such a deception, such a collapse of the hopes and expectations of

millions of people? That is why Comrade Stalin, in the thirty years of his power, never went to a single collective farm, did not visit a single factory workshop, and

I didn't lead round dances with the children. He did not seek the love of the masses, and he hardly believed in its existence. He needed nothing but obedience, absolute and unreasonable obedience, and he achieved it in the only way known and accessible to him. Terror. Massive and monstrosly cruel terror. He was convinced that universal fear is the stone on which his unshakable power will rest, and "the gates of hell will not be able to overcome it ...".

This was the main mistake of his life.

Needless to say, the fear of punishment is a powerful tool for influencing human behavior. It's pointless to deny it. But **even more absurd were the hopes of Comrade Stalin that the people crushed by terror could be roused to the Great Patriotic War.** For many years, ruling Russia undividedly and uncontrollably, Stalin did not understand the meaning of the wise Russian proverb: "The wedge is knocked out with a wedge." The strongest blow inflicted by the Wehrmacht destroyed the old fear with new fear, and the Chekist's revolver became dull and lost among the roar of thousands of guns, among the clang of the caterpillars of thousands of tanks. And then the Stalinist empire, held together by terror and ruled by terror, began to rapidly and uncontrollably

fall apart. Like a barrel from which the hoops were knocked down.

WHEN DID THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR BEGIN?

Salvation came from where Stalin could not have expected it. This miraculous deliverance from imminent death shocked the leader of the people so much that he could not restrain himself and declared it publicly. True, then he quickly came to his senses and did not say that out loud again. But in November 1941, speaking at a solemn meeting dedicated to the next anniversary of the Bolshevik coup, Stalin suddenly told the truth: *"Hitler's stupid policy turned the peoples of the USSR into sworn enemies of today's Germany" [172]*. These words briefly and accurately formulate the main reason why the fight for the redistribution of robber booty between the two bloody dictatorships eventually turned into the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people. Hitler committed a long

series of blatant stupidities at a time when victory over the Stalinist empire literally fell into his hands. The first mistake was the very strategic orientation towards a purely military defeat of the enemy. One and a half hundred German divisions could not occupy the country, stretching from Brest to Vladivostok and from Murmansk to Ashgabat. If the Soviet Union could be destroyed, then only by an explosion from within (which actually happened exactly half a century later), and the only meaning of a military operation could only be the initiation of such an explosion. But Hitler, this narcissistic fanatic who imagines himself to be an instrument of "providence", could not (or did not want to) understand such obvious truths. And yet, regardless of the initial plans of the Nazi leadership, the process of internal decomposition of the Soviet state proceeded at an ever-increasing pace.

In the national outskirts of the USSR (the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, later the North Caucasus and the Kuban), a full-scale armed uprising began, which led to the appearance in Lvov, Riga and Kaunas of the governments of self-proclaimed "states". Most of the population of the central regions of the country met the Germans, although without flowers, but with a mixed feeling of distrust and expectation. Already to

At the beginning of autumn, the Germans had one and a half million former Red Army soldiers in captivity, during September-October 1941 this number more than doubled. In fact, it was a huge "draft contingent", with command personnel, with military specialists of all kinds and with cyclopean mountains of ammunition and weapons - from rifles to KV tanks, inclusive - which, after all, did not evaporate without a trace, but remained in gigantic quantities on the territory controlled by the Wehrmacht. The Wehrmacht generals, who saw the

situation in the Red Army and in the prison camps at close range, repeatedly turned to Hitler with a proposal to use the unique situation in order to quickly withdraw the USSR from the war. It was quite possible to repeat the experience of 1917-1918, when Germany, supporting the change of power in Russia, concluded a separate Brest peace with the new government and thus secured a free hand for an offensive on the Western Front. The formula of Taras Bulba ("I gave birth to you, I will kill you") could well have been applied by the Germans to the Bolshevik regime in Russia.

On the ruins of the Soviet Union, several "independent states" allied to Nazi Germany (like Slovakia or Croatia) could be created, which would provide the Wehrmacht with food, raw materials for the military industry, and auxiliary military formations. However, Hitler, in whose diseased brain the racist nonsense about the "inferiority of the Slavs" fancifully mixed with the fear of the eastern giant, answered that he did not need an alliance with the Slavic "subhumans", and the Wehrmacht was required to simply and quickly defeat the Red Army. Then he stopped responding altogether. When Field Marshal von Bock, commander of Army Group Center, sent to Berlin a project to create a "liberation army" of 200,000 volunteers and form a Russian government in Smolensk, his report was returned in November 1941 with Keitel's resolution: "Such ideas are *not can be discussed with the Fuehrer.*"

For the most biased and inattentive readers, I explain: the above is not a story about "how good it could be." These are sad thoughts that everything could be even worse than it was in reality, although, it would seem, much worse? In the fire of world war

there was a ford, and the defeat of Stalin would only mean a colossal strengthening of Hitler's position, in whose hands could be the gigantic raw materials resources of the richest country in the world, and even millions of obedient, familiar to everything, workers. The regime that could be established on the territory "liberated" from the power of the NKVD / VKP (b) would most likely differ from Stalin's only in the color of the banners and inscriptions on the doors of the authorities' offices. However, it is possible that the names of the owners of many cabinets could remain the same ... Fortunately for mankind, Hitler missed the

unique chance that many years of Bolshevik bossing in Russia provided him. He did not even try to "sweeten the pill" and present his aggression against the USSR as a "liberation campaign". The captured Red Army soldiers, who were abandoned by the Soviet state, were herded like cattle into huge meadows entangled with barbed wire and starved there with dysentery. Better than all the GlavPUR agitators put together, the fascist leaders showed and proved to the soldiers of the Red Army that captivity is not a salvation from death. The release of captured Red Army soldiers of a number of nationalities, begun at the time on the initiative of the army command, was stopped on November 13, 1941. And then came the early and fierce winter, in which two-thirds of the prisoners of 1941 died from cold, hunger and disease.

With the same categorical clarity, the occupation administration demonstrated to the stunned population that it was time to forget the formula "Germans are a cultured nation", and you need to get used to the "new order", which turned out to be even simpler than the old one - execution on the spot for any offense. With defiant frankness, the people were explained that serving the representatives of the "master race" would henceforth be the only meaning of life for those who were allowed to live. Not everyone was allowed. Nightmarish scenes of the genocide of Jews, the mass death of prisoners of war, executions of hostages, public executions - all this shocked the population of the occupied regions. And even those who met the German invasion in the summer of 1941 with the expectation of changes for the better were horrified and thought about how to live under such a "new order"

it is forbidden.

Yes, of course, the leaflets that rained down in millions from German planes were promised to the soldiers of the Red Army

good feeding in captivity and return home after the end of the war. But the "wireless telephone" of the people's rumor worked - and worked with amazing efficiency. So every day and month, more and more millions of Soviet people began to realize that the war in which they have to fight and die is no longer going on for the sake of the release of the next "class brothers" in Zanzibar, not for the final triumph of "the ever-living teachings of Karl Marx", but simply so that they, their families, their children can live and hope for a better future. **That's**

when the Great Patriotic War

began. Let's not simplify. The life of a multimillion human

communities are infinitely more complex than any scheme.

The formula proposed above ("an empire held together by terror and ruled by terror"), although it reflects the main dominant of the Stalinist state, is the ultimate journalistic simplification of reality. The poetic phrase *"as one man, the entire Soviet people"* is suitable only for a song. Soviet society was very, very heterogeneous. It was impossible to fulfill the task of accelerated industrial modernization by digging canals alone (and even stealing Western technology). The era of modernization brought to life the emergence of a multi-million "army" of energetic, ambitious youth, children of janitors and watchmen, for whom the revolution opened the way to the top of the social ladder. For them - young engineers and Stakhanovites, pilots and poets - the Soviet government was "our native Soviet government."

This was an amazing generation, which in 10-15 years went from a village hut under a rotten thatched roof, in which his parents lived, to the lecture hall of the capital's university; from the student bench to the office of the director of a huge plant. High social mobility, the intoxicating feeling that "the time for fairy tales has come to life," is perhaps a more powerful "social hallucinogen" than material comfort as such. Stalin understood this, skillfully supported the "storm and onslaught" of the Soviet youth, skillfully used ambitious "nominees" to ensure continuous rotation of personnel on the upper floors of the administrative pyramid. All the power of the propaganda machine of the totalitarian state was directed

on the formation among the Soviet youth of the image of a tangible and near luminous future, to which "all paths are open in our country." This extremely active, albeit relatively small, social stratum became the "reserve of the High Command", which at a critical moment helped to keep the Stalinist state from complete collapse. Finally, the author does not at all

propose to reduce the entire history of the war to sociology, and even more so to a description of psychological effects and affects. *"But do you know how strong we are, Basmanov? / Not by the army, no, not by Polish help, / by opinion; Yes! popular opinion,"* says one of the characters in Pushkin's "Boris Godunov". Beautifully said, but do not forget that the army rests not only on the "opinion of the people", but also on orders and discipline. The role of the military leader is enormous, and where commanders and commissars were able to maintain order and manageability, were able to save their soldiers from infection with general panic - there the enemy received a worthy rebuff in the first battles. Such divisions, regiments, battalions, batteries were found on every sector of the front. Tens of thousands of soldiers and commanders of the Red Army began their Patriotic War already at dawn on June 22, 1941. Caught in the chaos of a general flight without neighbors, without communications - and without hope of staying alive, these stubbornly not surrendering batteries and battalions again and again forced the Germans to turn around from marching order to

combat, they slowed down the pace of the offensive, knocked down the arrogance of the enemy. "In the world and death is red." The nameless heroes of the first days of the war did not get even this modest consolation. They had to die in obscurity, never knowing whether they managed to bring one common Victory closer at the cost of their lives. Most of them did not get any orders, or glory, or even a tombstone. But it was they who saved the country with their sacrificial feat. They won the precious time that was necessary for a profound revolution in the attitude of the people towards the war to take place. Let's not forget about the huge scale of the material and technical preparation of the Red Army, about the quantity and quality of Soviet weapons. Even a platoon (3 vehicles) of KV tanks could shoot and crush a Wehrma

the bunker, covered with indestructible concrete walls, could strew the entire bank of the border river with the corpses of

German soldiers ... Finally, the natural and geographical factor cannot be discounted. It should not be absolutized, but it is also absurd to deny the fact that the vast expanses of Russia themselves absorbed and dissolved the army of invaders. Napoleon was easy. His army, stretched out in a thread, marched in a column to Moscow. The Wehrmacht launched an offensive on the front from Kaunas to Przemysl (about 700 km in a straight line), and by the end of the year, fighting was already taking place on the front from Tikhvin to Rostov-on-Don (1600 km in a straight line). Communications of the German army were continuously stretched. Each projectile and each liter of gasoline had to cover a gigantic distance of one and a half to two thousand kilometers before reaching the front. These lines of communications had to be guarded, provided with air defense, garrisons. And with the onset of autumn, the dirt roads of the center of Russia completely turned

into a continuous sea of mud that is insurmountable for the Wehrmacht equipment. Having missed a very real opportunity to liquidate the Eastern Front by political means, Hitler did not even bother to make the most of all available military potential to achieve victory on the battlefield. Dozens of Wehrmacht divisions, hundreds of thousands of servicemen, millions of reservists deep in the rear were preparing for "operations of the post-Barbarossa period" at a time when the troops of the Eastern Front were melting away in fierce battles. Even those relatively moderate losses that the German troops suffered in the summer of 1941 were not compensated in full by the replenishment of equipment and personnel. The Germans did not reach Moscow. The Wehrmacht divisions, drained of blood by many months of battles, crawled to it with their last legs. There, in the snowy fields outside Moscow, the freezing remnants of the Eastern Army were routed by dozens of fresh Red Army divisions brought in from Siberia and the

Our story has come to an end. It remains only to answer the question that was put in the title of the last chapter. Of course, there can be no question of establishing some exact date for the "Great Break".

There are no such "switches" that in an instant are capable of producing a profound revolution in the minds of a huge multinational people. Nevertheless, some, quite rational criteria and reasonable time frames can and should be indicated. Let's open once again the statistical

collection "Secrecy stamp removed". This time - on page 152. There is a table of irretrievable (killed and missing) and sanitary (wounded and sick) losses of the personnel of the active army, broken down by quarters of each year of the war.

The sad experience of a great many military conflicts of the 20th century shows that there is a certain, very stable, ratio of the number of killed and wounded in hostilities - 1 to 3. For every one killed, there are three wounded. By the way, it was in these proportions that the losses of the Wehrmacht in 1941 were formed. Perhaps these figures reflect some fundamental relationship between the "strength" of the human body and the damaging effect of weapons of the first half of the 20th century. Be that as it may, in a situation of "normal war" (forgive me for such a cynical expression), the share of sanitary losses should be 75% of the total number of losses. More precisely, it should be even more than 75%, since in addition to the wounded there are also sick people, and there are not so few of them among people who live for months in mud-filled trenches. And

what does table number 72 show us?

In the third quarter of 1941 (that is, for the first three months of the war), the share of sanitary losses was only 24.66% of all losses. In other words, the ratio of irretrievable and sanitary losses turned out to be not 1 to 3, but 3 to 1. This is a very gloomy "miracle". Behind him is a huge number of prisoners and deserters (who made up the bulk of the irretrievable losses of the Red Army in the summer of 1941), behind him is the tragedy of the wounded thrown to the enemy, who were not taken to the rear and, therefore, were not taken into account in the

column "sanitary losses ". In the fourth quarter of 1941, the proportion of sanitary losses almost doubled to **40.77%**. Such proportions are still very, very far from the situation in a normal fighting army, but

nevertheless the changes are obvious. In the first quarter of 1942 - already **65.**

In the second and third quarters - respectively **47.48%** and **52.79%**. The Germans overwintered, regained strength and again drove thousands of columns of prisoners from the "cauldrons" near Kerch and Kharkov. But let us note that the monstrous situation of the summer of 1941 did not happen again!

By the end of 1942, the share of sanitary losses increases almost to the "normal" value of **67.25%**. Further, up to the victorious May 1945, the following figures follow: **79, 75, 76, 77, 79, 78...** The presence of a fundamental, qualitative change in the structure of losses does not raise the slightest doubt. The transition from 3 to 1 to 1 to 3 cannot be explained by statistical measurement errors. There is **a qualitative change in the state of the army that occurred at the turn of 1942-43**. The army ceased to "disperse", as a result of which the proportion of prisoners and deserters decreased to a few percent of the total losses. I apologize to everyone whom I

unwittingly offended with this cynical arithmetic of human grief. Believe me, I understand all the blasphemy of "playing with percentages" when millions of killed and maimed people are behind these percentages. But what to do - the work of a military historian is little more attractive than the work of a pathologist. Believe me, the historian and the pathologist do what they do, not because of an unhealthy addiction to the stench of a corpse, but in order to establish the final, always belated, but most accurate diagnosis. Of no less "diagnostic significance" is the dynamics of the development of the partisan

movement in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, we will not be able to give exact figures here - the very specifics of guerrilla warfare excludes the possibility of keeping accurate personal records of "personnel", and the topic of guerrilla warfare to this day remains a huge "dark spot" in Russian historiography. Nevertheless, even from the few available sources [144, 151, 156, 161], a picture emerges of a radical change in the situation in the occupied territories that occurred in 1942-1943.

"... Most of the partisan detachments (created in Belarus by September 1941 - M.S.) were completely formed from NKVD and police officers, without the involvement of local residents, communication with the party and Soviet activists was not established ... Later, V

in the process of creating partisan detachments by the regional committees of the party from among the local party-Soviet activists, their leading core was still made up of operational officers of the NKVD ... At the end of 1941 and at the beginning of 1942, the creation and abandonment of sabotage groups crossed the front line. - M.S.) partisan formations... The basis for the formation of partisan detachments was still operative workers of the NKVD and the police, agents of state security agencies... ...The general picture is as follows. In February 1942, the NKVD, together with the party organs, prepared

*and deployed behind enemy lines 1,798 partisan detachments and 1,533 sabotage groups with a total number of 77,939 people. If we proceed from the fact that in 1941 the total number of partisans in the occupied territory was about 90 thousand people, and the number of partisan detachments - 2 thousand, then it turns out that **90% were trained by the NKVD. They also led them**" [151, pp. 71, 76, 82, 83]. So, at the initial stage of the war (until the spring of 1942), the "people's avengers" detachments did not consist at all of*

teenagers and old people with hunting rifles - as it was customary to portray in all Soviet mythology - but of "operational officers" of punitive bodies. The number of partisans from among the local residents-volunteers did not exceed 10-15 thousand people, i.e. was ten times (!!!) less than the number of "policemen" and "Khivi".

This was the beginning of the guerrilla war. In the future, the situation has changed significantly. And in the exact opposite direction from the expected one:

"... UNKVD in the Leningrad Region sent 287 detachments with a total number of 11,733 people behind enemy lines. By February 7, 1942, only 60 detachments of 1965 people remained, **i.e. about 17%** ... In Ukraine, ...

the state security agencies left behind enemy lines and transferred 778 partisan detachments and 622 sabotage groups with a total number of 28,753 people there. However, as of August 25, 1942, only 22 detachments, numbering 3,310 people, were listed as active. Consequently, for 12 months of the war

less than 3% of partisan detachments and groups from among those abandoned behind enemy lines in 1941 survived ...

... In Belarus, by January 1942, out of 437 groups and detachments that were thrown behind enemy lines, **412, or 95%, ceased to exist.** ... In the very first winter of

war, almost all large formations, numbering several hundred people, were destroyed or disintegrated into separate groups ... By the middle of 1942, the number of partisans was 65 thousand people ... "[151, p. 82, 158, 174].

The above figures give a concrete and exhaustive answer to the question about the attitude of the population of the territories of the USSR occupied by the Germans to the "people's avengers" from among the "state security agencies". In such

circumstances, the defeat of most of the partisan groups created in the first year of the war was quite natural. According to the plan of the Soviet leadership, these small detachments (their average number was 20-25 people) were to play the role of "condensation centers", around which, figuratively speaking, "clouds" were to gather. In fact, the number of partisans not only did not grow, but by the summer of 1942 it even decreased by one and a half times. And this despite the fact that the area of the occupied territories increased markedly after the severe defeat at Kharkov and the German breakthrough to Stalingrad and Muzdok. Particularly impressive is the dynamics of changes in the number of partisan formations in Ukraine, where they were almost completely destroyed.

The people's war against the invaders acquired a truly massive character only in 1943-1944. So, in Belarus, where the presence of huge forests created especially favorable conditions, the number of partisans in April 1943 was 68,498 people. In total, by April 1, 1943, there were 889 partisans on the entire territory occupied by the Germans. According to the report of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, as of June 1, 1943, 1061 detachments with a total number of 142,000 fighters were in touch with the headquarters of the partisan movement. Finally, by January 1944, the number of partisans in Belarus reached 122 thousand people, and in the winter of 1944 a whole "partisan army" with a total number of 200 thousand people fought behind enemy lines.

The effectiveness of the combat operations of the partisans also increased significantly. Thus, an analysis carried out after the war on the basis of captured Wehrmacht documents showed that out of 18,000 trains that crashed as a result of sabotage on the railways, 15,000 were attacked in 1943-1944. On the eve of Operation Bagration, the largest offensive operations of the Red Army, which ended with the liberation of most of Belarus and the defeat of the German Army Group Center - on the night of July 20, 1944, partisans blew up 40 thousand rails, completely paralyzing any railway communication behind enemy lines. In the period 1943-1944, when every German garrison, every convoy, every train was in a state of constant expectation of an attack, the newspaper slogan "The earth is burning under the feet of the occupiers" became a tangible reality. Of course, the above figures and facts can only be considered as one of the first possible approaches to

assessing the situation. But even taking into account all these reservations, the fact of a fundamental, qualitative change in the situation in the occupied territories, the rapid growth of the partisan movement, which emerged in early 1943, is obvious and indisputable.

Summarizing all of the above, the approximate time frame in which the "Great Break" took place can be defined as follows: **autumn 1942 - summer 1943.**

Translated into the generally accepted chronology of the war - from the Battle of Stalingrad to the Kursk Bulge.

EPILOGUE

"The world-historical significance of the victory of the Soviet people in Great Patriotic War".

This question among schoolchildren and students has always been considered very simple. Lucky. No need to memorize the dates, memorize the names of the fronts - know your cracks about "creating a world system of socialism", "strengthening authority on the world stage", "liquidating a hostile environment" ... This

book was written not for schoolchildren, but for adults, not afraid of the truth about the past of their country, ready to think about its present and future. The citizens of our country have yet to find an answer to the question of what banner the Soviet soldiers raised in May 1945 over the defeated Reichstag: the banner of the Great Victory or the banner of their defeat? For Stalin, the Second World

War, the war he so insistently and so clumsily prepared, provoked and fomented, ended in victory. Shedding rivers of human blood, saved from seemingly inevitable death by the sacrificial heroism of millions of Soviet people, the Stalinist regime emerged from the war in the radiance and splendor of the greatest triumph. A gigantic army (which, having discarded the last memories of the revolutionary past as unnecessary, was no longer called the "Red") was already standing on the banks of the Danube and the Elbe. The Owner himself was proclaimed the most brilliant commander of all times and peoples. Admired and enchanted, the henchmen presented him with the highest military rank of Generalissimo. The political bankrupt and contemptible coward, who in the first days of the war did not even have the courage to turn to the people with an explanation of what had happened, was declared "the creator and organizer of the Great Victory." It cannot be denied that

the growth of the military-technical power of the Soviet Union, the enormous increase in its ability to make the whole world tremble with fear, was truly stunning. Thousands of tons of technical documentation were taken out of defeated Germany, entire research and design teams were taken out. From gullible enemies-allies by hook or by crook they bought, mined, stole the latest

military technology. The booty was huge: jet engines, anti-aircraft missiles, radars, ballistic missiles, infrared homing systems... And, finally, the pinnacle of all efforts - twenty thousand pages of technical description of the American atomic bomb, copied and successfully tested just four years after the fall of Berlin.

By the time Stalin died - or was poisoned by his comrades in the Politburo? The Soviet Union was armed and very dangerous. More than ever. And yet I do not want to believe that only for the sake of this, millions of people were martyred. Yes, in the unthinkable painful conditions created by the many years of arbitrariness of the criminal Stalinist regime, the Soviet people, their multinational Red Army saved Europe from fascist enslavement. Once again, the forced Russian peasant, sacrificing himself, opened the door to peace and prosperity for other peoples. Monuments to the Soviet soldier should stand on the squares of Paris and Vienna, London and Brussels. But what were the deep, long-term consequences of the Great Patriotic War for Russia itself? How did the

death of millions of the best, most honest,

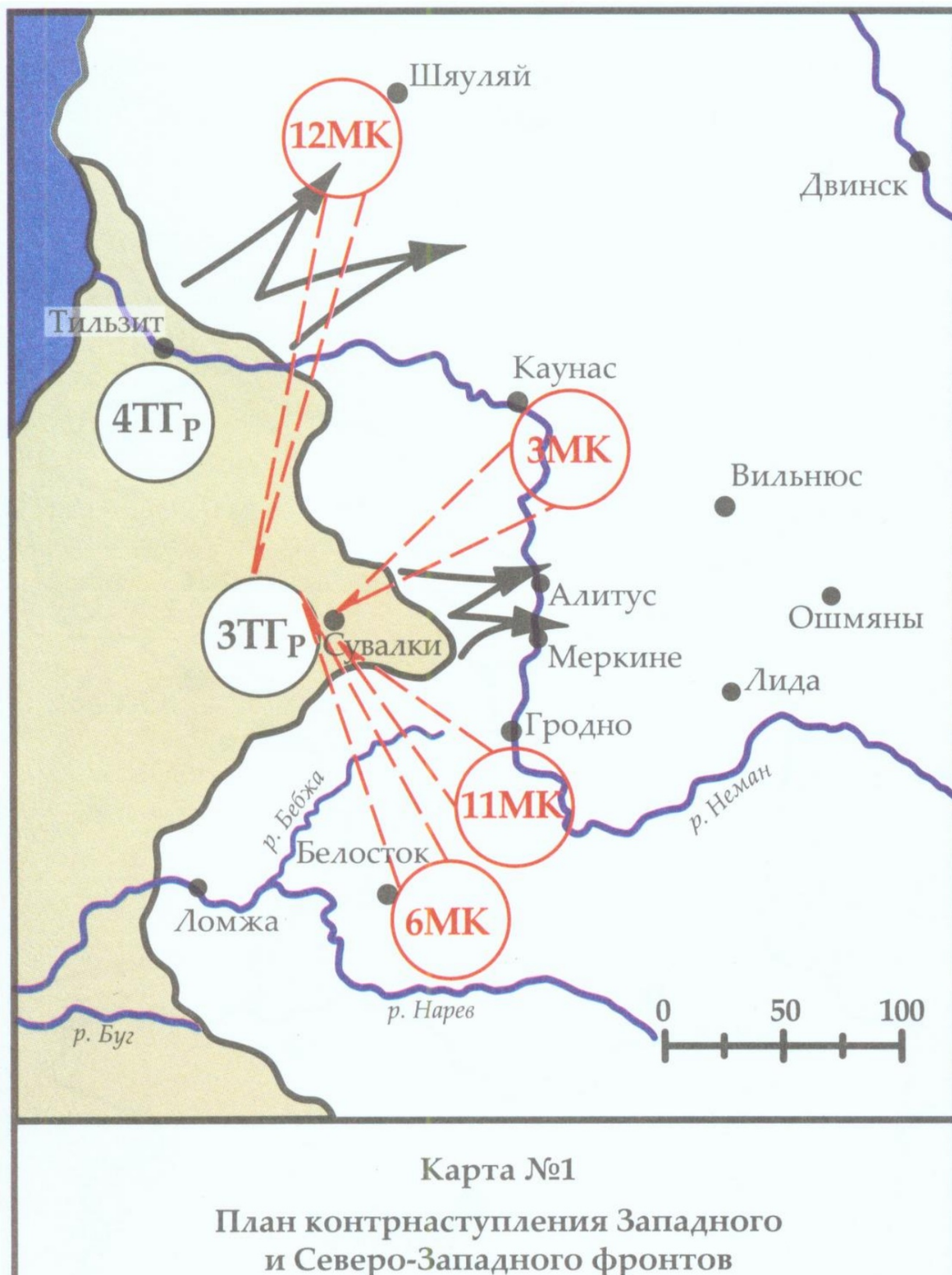
the most daring on moral principles, on the very gene pool of the nation?

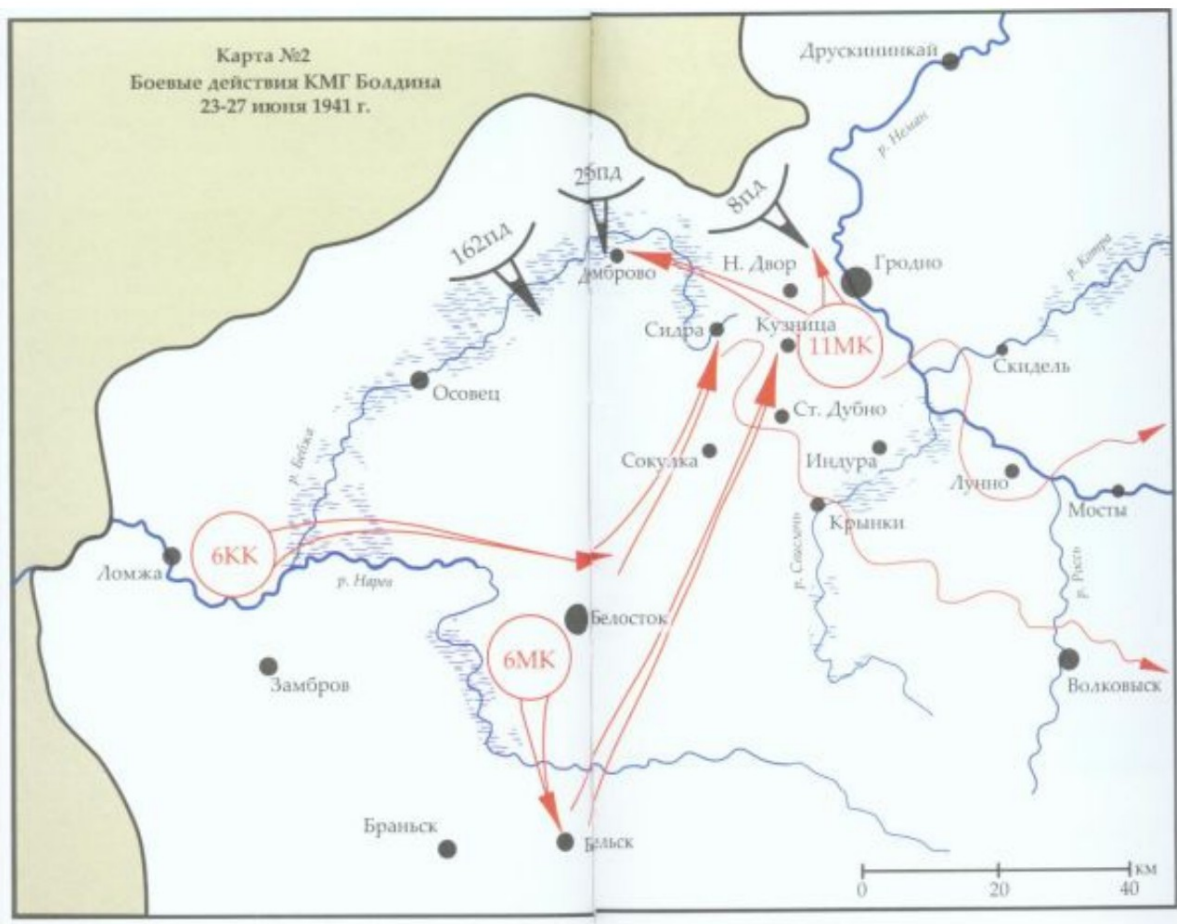
Were the spiritual forces of the people overstrained by the superhuman tension of those four years?

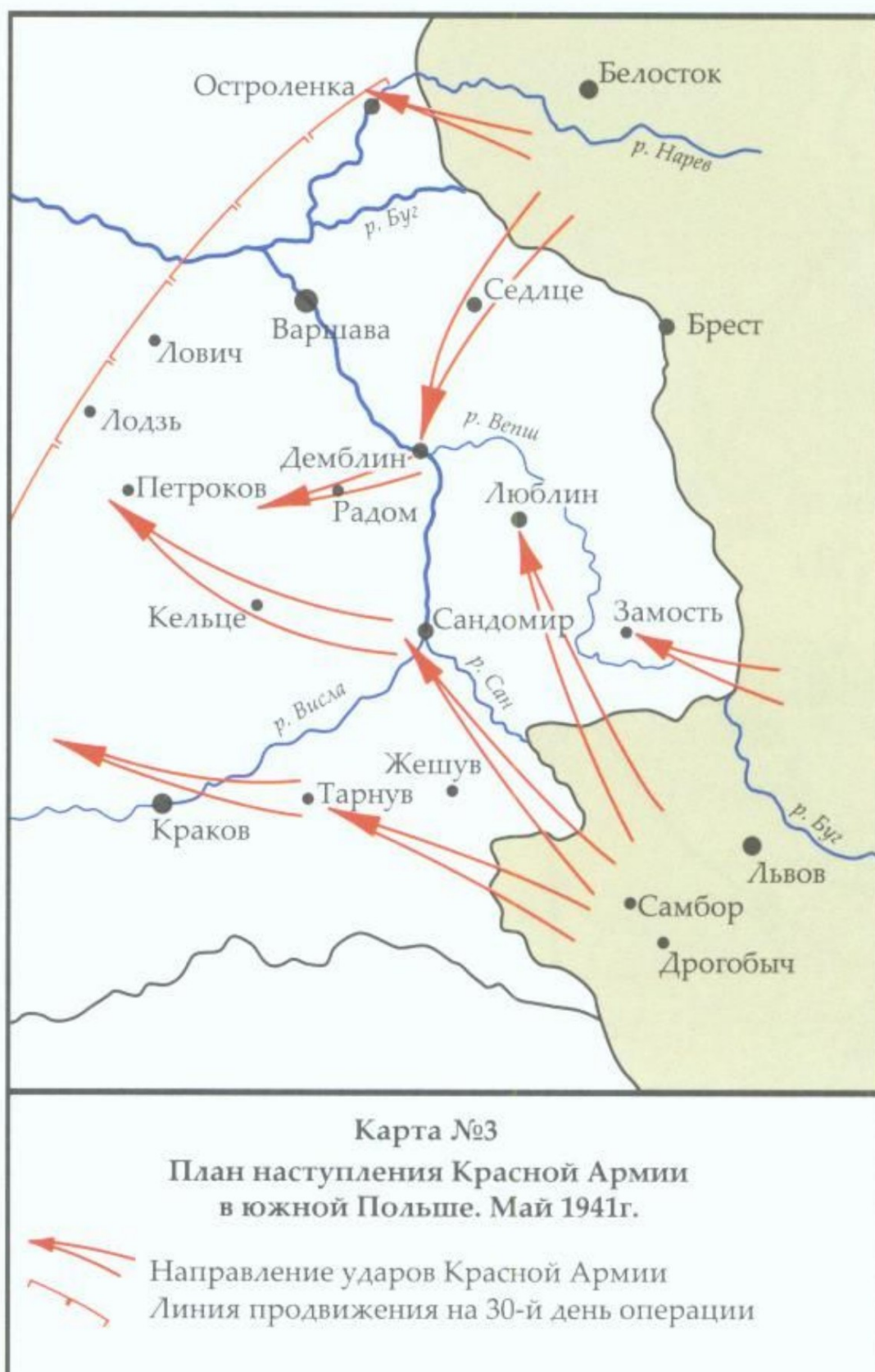
Could not that brightest flash of mass heroism, mass self-sacrifice, which the Soviet people showed to the astonished world, turn out to be the last surge of strength of the dying?

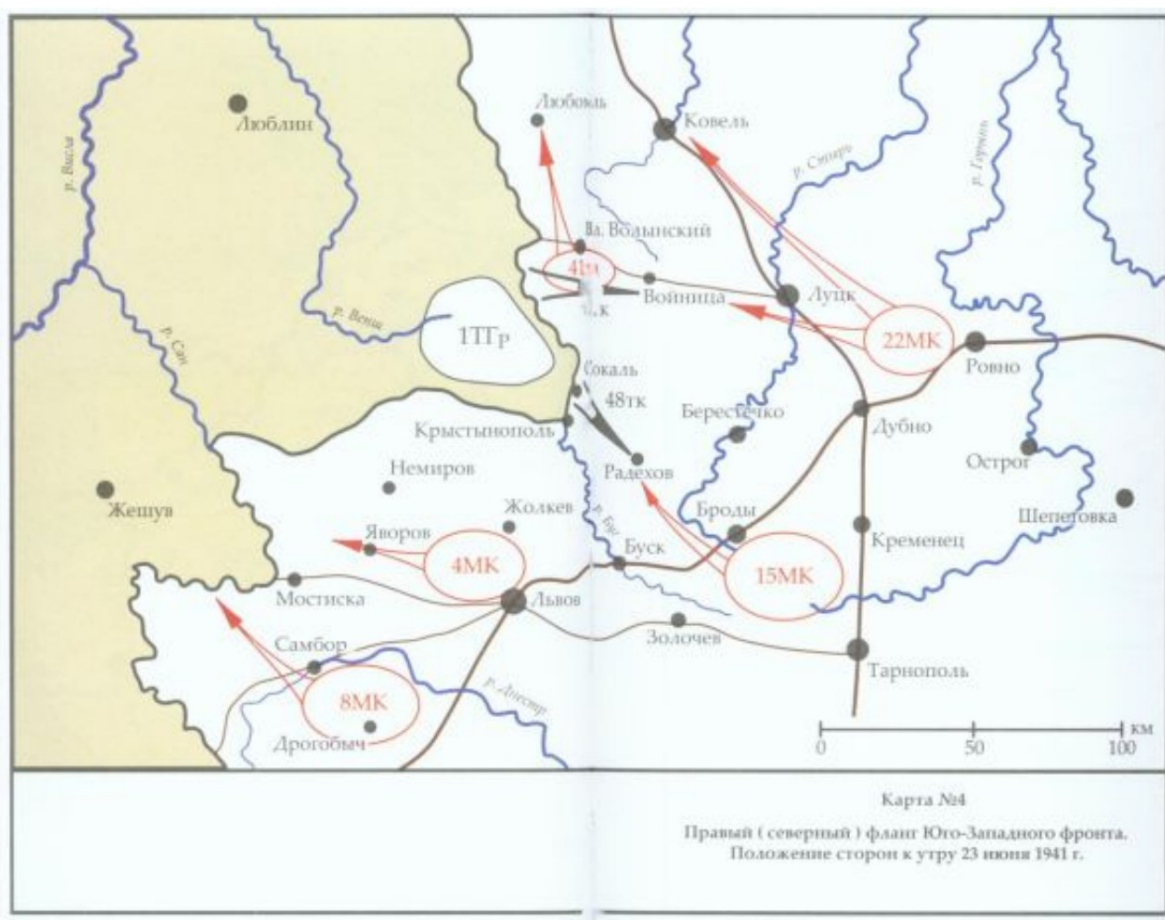
These are the questions to which only life itself can answer, and in the face of which the historian can only shut up and put an end to it.

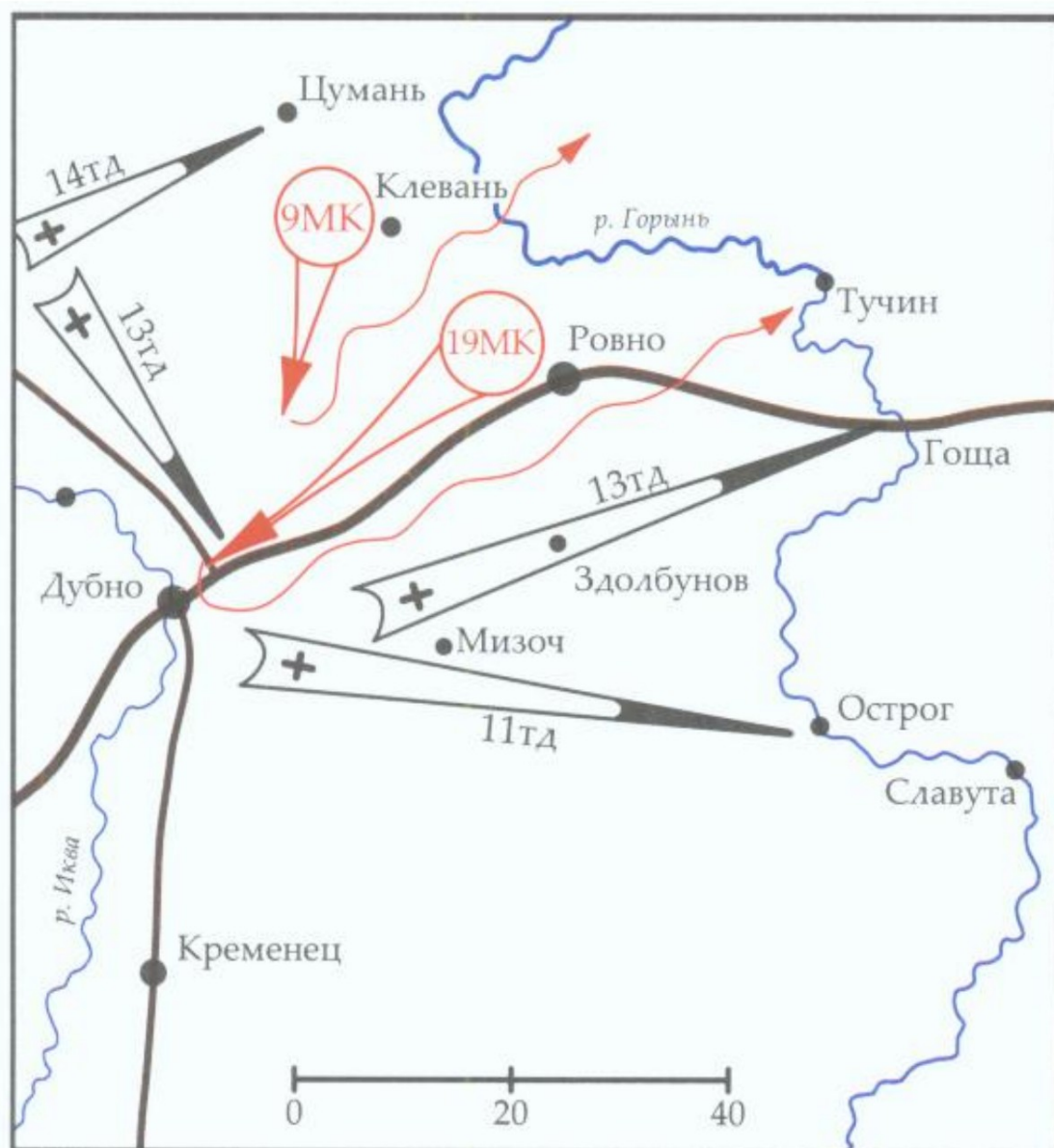
CARDS





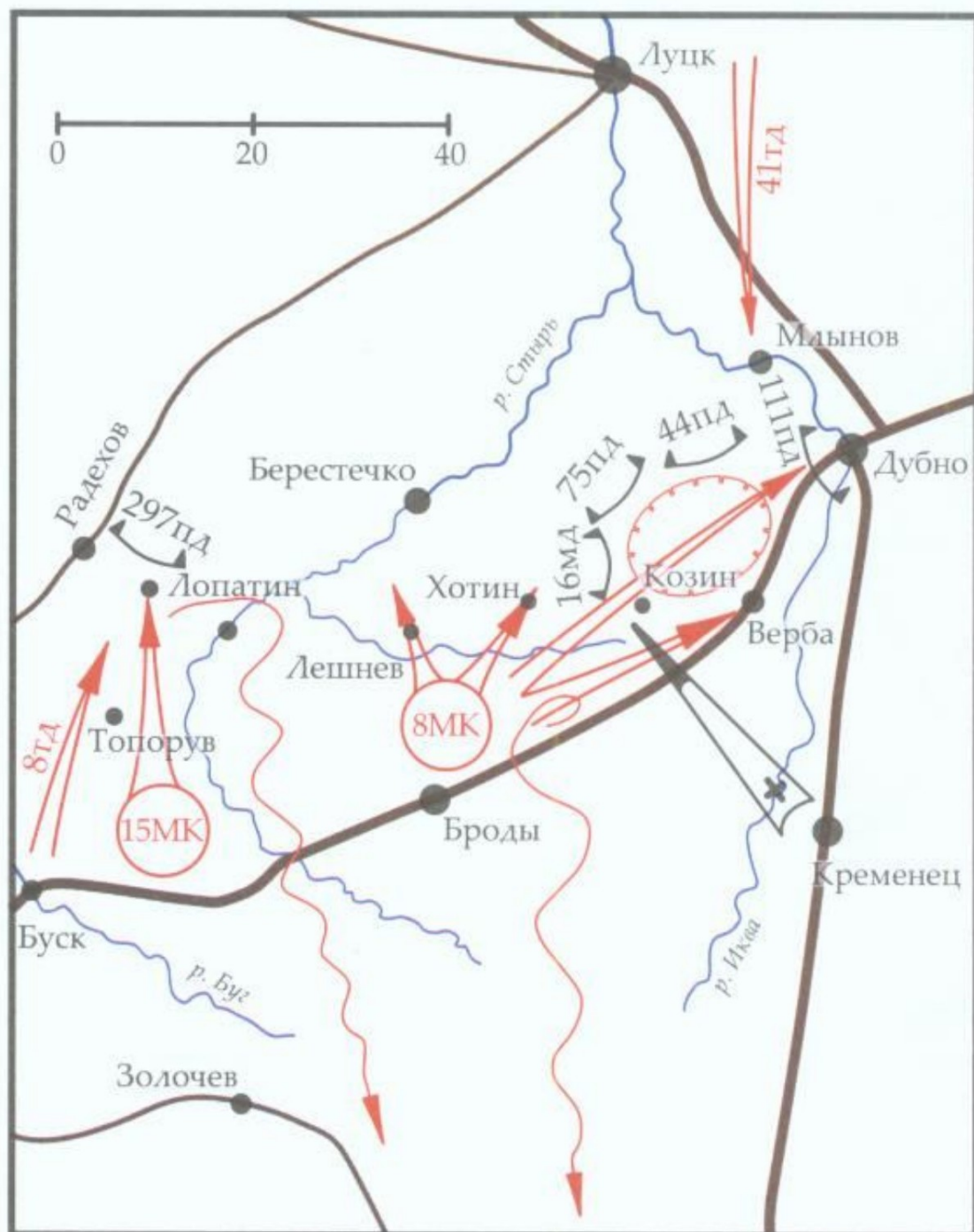






Карта №5

Танковое сражение у Дубно.
Боевые действия "северной группировки"
26-28 июня 1941г.



Карта №6
Танковое сражение у Дубно.
Боевые действия "южной группировки"
26-30 июня 1941г.

APPENDIX No. 1

MILITARY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1. The structure of the ground forces

Ground forces were the basis of the armed forces of the USSR and Germany. In relation to Germany, they are designated by the word "**Wehrmacht**". As for the Soviet Union, the terms "**Red Army**" (**Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, RKKA**) can refer to both the entire Armed Forces and only to the ground forces. **Military aviation** (Air Force, Air Force) of Germany is usually

denoted by the word "**Luftwaffe**". A characteristic specific feature of the Luftwaffe was the inclusion of ground-based air defense (air defense) forces in its composition, i.e. anti-aircraft, searchlight, radar parts.

2. Subdivisions, units, formations

The primary "cell" of the military structure is **the POLK**. This is a military **unit** that has its own individual number and its own banner. Structural **units** within the regiment (in descending order of personnel): battalion, company, platoon, squad. Units do not have their own "personal" numbers and are designated by ordinal numbers, for example: "the third platoon of the second company of the first battalion of the 486th rifle regiment."

Approximate number of personnel of rifle units and subunits: - Regiment
- 3-4 thousand

people; - battalion - 700-800

people; - company - 200 people;

- platoon - 50 people;

- department - 10

people. In the Red Army

there were rifle regiments (**sp**), motorized rifle regiments (**smp**), tank regiments (**tp**). Artillery regiments, depending on the type of weapons used, were sometimes referred to as "cannon artillery regiment" (**pap**) or "howitzer artillery regiment" (**gap**). The divisions of an artillery regiment are called **a division** and **a battery**. The composition and number of weapons of an artillery regiment are very different, and only by way of example can we cite the following typical structure: - 4 guns in one battery; - 12 guns in one division (three batteries); - 36 or 48 guns per regiment (three to four divisions).

Several regiments were combined into the main tactical formation - the DIVISION. So, in the composition of the rifle division (**sd**) of the Red Army there were three rifle and two artillery regiments, 14,483 personnel. The motorized division of the Red Army included two rifle, one tank and one artillery regiment. Along with divisions (the main tactical unit), the Red Army had **brigades** (rifle, tank, artillery). A brigade is smaller than a division, usually consisting of 2-3 regiments (or 4-5 separate battalions). Several divisions were combined into a rifle **corps (SC)**. The Red Army rifle

corps did not have a fixed strength and could include from two to five rifle divisions. In addition, the corps included **reinforcement units** (one or two artillery regiments, an anti-aircraft division, a pontoon-bridge battalion, etc.)

The mechanized corps (**MK**) included two tank and one motorized divisions, a separate motorcycle regiment, and reinforcement units.

In relation to the Wehrmacht, the same terms and abbreviations are used, only instead of the term "rifle" the term "infantry" is used: infantry regiment (**pp**), infantry division (**pd**). The infantry division of the Wehrmacht consisted of 16,589 personnel, including three infantry and one artillery regiments, several separate battalions and divisions. An analogue of the rifle corps in the Wehrmacht is designated by the term "army corps" (AK). Wehrmacht tank corps (**TK**) did not have a fixed structure, as a rule, the Wehrmacht TK included two tank and one or two motorized divisions.

Several corps were combined into a large unit - **the ARMY**. In the text of the book, they are designated as follows: 5th Army, 10th Army ... In peacetime, the army was the largest unit in the Red Army. During the war (or on the eve of the planned war), several armies, separate divisions and corps were united into the most powerful formation - **the Front**. In the Wehrmacht, the analogue of the "front" was a large formation called **the Army Group**. Three army groups were deployed for the invasion of the Soviet Union: "North" (with the task of advancing across the Baltic to Leningrad), "Center" (for an attack on Minsk - Smolensk) and "South" (to capture Ukraine and, in cooperation with the Romanian army , Moldova).

In the tank forces of the Red Army there were no formations of a higher level than the mechanized corps (mechanized corps). In the Wehrmacht, four tank groups (**TGr**) were formed : the 1st TGr as part of the Army Group South, the 2nd and 3rd as part of the Army Group Center and the 4th TGr as part of the Army Group North . They included two (4th and 3rd tank groups) or three (2nd and 1st tank groups) tank corps.

3. Artillery and mortars

Barrel artillery guns are divided into two main classes: **GUNS and HOWitzers**. The main external difference is the length

barrels: for guns the barrel is long (40-50 calibers), for howitzers it is short (20-30 calibers). Different barrel lengths determine the decisive difference in the value of the initial velocity of the projectile: 650-750 m/s for cannons, 350-500 m/s for howitzers. Of course, **the projectile** does not accelerate the barrel itself, but **the propellant charge**, which in a cannon **artillery shot** (the main elements of an artillery shot are a projectile, a fuse and a propellant charge) is much more powerful than in a howitzer artillery shot. The greater power (i.e., greater weight of gunpowder) of a cannon artillery round entails greater weight and dimensions of the bolt, barrel, recoil and all other components and assemblies of the gun. As a result, the gun weighs several times more than a howitzer of the same caliber. For example, the most massive M-30 howitzer of 122 mm caliber in the Red Army weighed (in combat position, that is, without taking into account the weight of the artillery limber - a two-wheeled cart on which the gun beds rest when moving) 2200 kg, and the A-19 gun of the same the 122 mm caliber itself weighed 7080 kg in combat position.

The high muzzle velocity of the cannon projectile makes it possible to provide a significantly greater firing range (for example, the maximum firing range of a 122 mm howitzer was 8.9 km, and that of a 122 mm A-19 gun was 20.4 km). When firing at short distances, the gun (due to the high muzzle velocity of the projectile) makes it possible to conduct targeted shooting with **"flat fire"** (the projectile flight path is almost straight and almost parallel to the ground surface). Howitzers, on the other hand, shoot **with "overhead fire"** (the projectile is thrown at an angle of 30-45 degrees to the horizon and flies along a parabola), which in some cases is an important tactical advantage (the ability to fire at invisible targets on the reverse slopes of heights, defeat enemy manpower hidden in trenches and trenches). A kind of

artillery pieces were
the so-called **regimental and mountain**

guns. These are light, short-barreled guns with a low (more typical for howitzers) muzzle velocity, but intended (unlike howitzers) both for mounted firing and for direct fire at short (400-500 m) distances.

MORTAR is a smooth-bore gun for launching a
mine - a projectile with aerodynamic winged

stabilizers (similar to the plumage of an arrow). And although the mortar tube is closed from below and, accordingly, is loaded with the pressure of the gases of the propellant charge, this pressure is an order of magnitude less than the pressure inside the barrel of a conventional artillery gun. The recoil of the shot through the base plate is transmitted to the ground. As a result, the mortar barrel (and the entire system as a whole) is many times lighter than a howitzer of a similar caliber. So, for example, a 120-mm mortar weighed (in combat position) only 275 kg.

The disadvantages (or features) of mortars include the low range and accuracy of fire due to the low initial speed of the mine, the fundamental impossibility of conducting "flat fire". The advantages are the simplicity and reliability of the design, low weight, high combat rate of fire. The production of mortars did not require the use of complex equipment and high-alloy steels

3. Anti-tank guns and armor-piercing shells

To combat tanks (and other armored targets), special types of guns were developed - **anti-tank guns**. As long as the main type of **armor-piercing projectile** was a steel "blank", penetrating the armor of a tank due to its kinetic energy, the main requirement for an anti-tank gun was the maximum possible muzzle velocity of the projectile. Structurally, this required an exceptionally long barrel (60 or more calibers). High armor penetration is the most important, but not the only requirement for an anti-tank gun and armor-piercing projectile. The tank is able to maneuver, both in the operational sense (tanks can suddenly appear at an unpredictable point of the front), and tactically (directly on the battlefield). Accordingly, the means of combating a tank (anti-tank gun) should have the maximum possible ability to maneuver "with wheels and fire." This means that the anti-tank gun must be light enough so that the gun crew can manually (in the truest sense of this

words) deploy it in a firing position, roll it to another position. In addition, the wheel drive must allow the anti-tank gun to be towed over rough terrain at high speed. All of the above led to the fact that relatively small (37 /

57 mm) caliber guns were used as anti-tank guns, but with long barrels and an initial projectile speed from 750 to 1150 m / s (which is 3.3 times higher than the speed of sound near the ground) . In the initial period of World War II, even smaller caliber systems were widely used: 20/25 mm anti-tank guns and 8/15 mm anti-tank rifles. However, the further development of armored vehicles made useless not only ultralight systems, but also the most common 37, 45, 50-mm anti-tank guns. By the end of the war, the caliber of anti-tank guns had grown to 75/88 mm. This made it possible to completely solve the problem of armor penetration (the German 88-mm anti-tank gun Rak-43 pierced armor 180 mm thick at short ranges), but the weight of the gun went beyond all reasonable limits (Rak-43 weighed 3700 kg, which made it practically motionless on the battlefield). In fact, anti-tank artillery reached a dead end, a way out of which became possible only after the development of cumulative striking elements, for which the speed of delivery of the projectile to the armor no longer mattered, which made it possible in the post-war period to replace the anti-tank gun with an unguided rocket (anti-tank grenade launcher) or remote-controlled missile (PTUPC).

4. Tanks, tankettes, self-propelled guns, armored vehicles, armored personnel carriers

TANK is a combat vehicle with three characteristic features: -
armored hull, - caterpillar
mover,

- a gun (cannon) in a **rotating turret**.

Flamethrower (or "chemical") tanks were quite common at the beginning of World War II. Instead of a cannon, a device was installed in the rotating turret of such a tank, capable of ejecting several liters of liquid (fire mixture or liquid agents such as mustard gas) at a distance of 50-80 m. Placing an artillery piece inside a rotating turret of limited dimensions is a very difficult engineering problem. Therefore, tanks at the beginning of the war were armed with small-caliber

guns (37/50 mm) or short-barreled (with a short range of aimed fire) guns of 75/76 mm caliber. Combat use has shown that guns with such parameters are not enough to effectively support infantry on the battlefield. Therefore, armored tracked vehicles of a new type were developed - **SELF-PROPELLED GUNS** ("assault guns", self-propelled artillery mounts, self-propelled guns). The external difference between the self-propelled guns and the tank is the absence of a rotating turret (the gun is installed in a fixed conning tower, sometimes even open from the stern). All types of self-propelled guns can be divided into two groups: infantry support guns and tank destroyers. In the first case, the armament consists of a powerful cannon (or howitzer of up to 152 mm caliber) and machine guns, in the second case, the self-propelled guns were armed with an anti-tank gun and were especially heavily armored. In the 30s, light **tankettes** (small tanks) with machine guns were mass-produced. In the Soviet Union, such tankettes (T-37 / T-38 / T-40), intended for use in reconnaissance units of tank and rifle divisions, also had the ability to move on water

(amphibious tanks). However, as the infantry was saturated with anti-tank defense means, the use of tankettes became less and less possible. By the end of World War II, they practically disappeared as an independent class of combat vehicles. **ARMORED VEHICLE** is a wheeled closed armored fighting vehicle with machine gun (and in some cases cannon) armament. The most powerful armored vehicles were Soviet

BA-10, created on the basis of the chassis of a three-axle off-road vehicle and armed with a 45-mm cannon in a rotating turret of a light tank. Despite the powerful (for its time) armament, cannon armored vehicles were not widely used, as they were much inferior to tanks in cross-country ability. On the other hand, a wide variety of models of light armored vehicles (reconnaissance, commander, radio communications) were successfully used throughout the war. **The armored vehicle**, although it was often developed

on the chassis of the same car as the armored vehicle, was radically different from the latter both in purpose and in appearance. Armored personnel carriers during the Second World War were, as a rule, open wheeled vehicles with armored sides and a driver's cab, with light machine guns (or no weapons at all). They were designed to transport personnel of motorized rifle units of tank (motorized) divisions. The armored personnel carrier of that period was not an infantry fighting vehicle (IFV), its task was only to bring the motorized infantry to the deployment area, the motorized infantry moved independently (i.e. on foot) on the battlefield.

APPENDIX No. 2

The composition and armament of the tank troops of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, who took part in the hostilities in the period from June 22 to June 10

July

Группа армий «Север» 4-я танковая группа 41 ТК (1 тд, 6 тд) 390/114 /155/121 56 ТК (8 тд) 212/64/118/30 всего танков: 602	Северо-Западный фронт 12 МК (23 тд, 28 тд, 202 мсд) 730/0 3 МК (2 тд, 5 тд, 84 мсд) 672/128 1 МК (3 тд, 163 смд) 666/ 10 21 МК (42 тд, 46 тд, 185 мсд) 120/0 2188
Группа армий «Центр» 3-я танковая группа 39 ТК (7 тд, 20 тд) 494/ 145/ 288/ 61/ 57 ТК (12 тд, 19 тд) 448/ 169/ 219/ 60/ 2-я танковая группа 47 ТК (17 тд, 18 тд) 420/ 134/ 99/ 187/ 46 ТК (10 тд) 182 /57 /0 /125 / 24 ТК (3 тд, 4 тд) 392/125/60/207/ Всего танков: 1936	Западный фронт 11 МК (29 тд, 33 тд, 204 мсд) 414/27 6 МК (4 тд, 7 тд, 29 мсд) 1131/ 452 13 МК (25 тд, 31 тд, 208 мсд) 282/ 0 14 МК (22 тд, 30 тд, 205 мсд) 518/0 7 МК (14 тд, 18 тд, 1 мсд) 959/103 5 МК (13 тд, 17 тд) 861/17 отдельная 57 тд 200/ 0 4365
Группа армий «Юг» 1-я танковая группа 3 ТК (13 тд, 14 тд) 296/ 114/ 42/ 140/ 48 ТК (11 тд, 16 тд) 289/ 107/ 47/ 135/ 14 ТК (9 тд) 143/ 52/ 11/ 80/ Всего танков: 728	Юго-Западный и Южный фронты 22 МК (19 тд, 41тд, 215 мсд) 15 МК (10 тд, 37 тд, 212 мсд) 4 МК (8 тд, 32 тд, 81 мсд) 8 МК (12 тд, 34 тд, 7 мсд) 9 МК (20 тд, 35 тд, 131 мсд) 19 МК (40 тд, 43 тд, 213 мсд) 16 МК (15 тд, 39 тд, 240 мсд) 24 МК (45 тд, 49 тд, 21 бмсд) 109 мсд (5 МК) 209/ 0 2 МК (11 тд, 16 тд, 15 мсд) 527/60 18 МК (44 тд, 47 тд, 218 мсд) 282/- 5826

ИТОГО: 3266 танков

в том числе 1081 танкеток

1039 легких танков

1146 средних танков

12 379 танков

в том числе 1558 Т-34 и КВ

Note.

1. The number of tanks in the formations of the Wehrmacht is indicated as follows:

total tanks in the hull / tankettes / light tanks / medium tanks / 2. The category of "tankettes" includes Pz-I, Pz-II and armed machine guns "commander tanks";

among the "light tanks": Czech Pz-38 (t) and Pz-III of the first series with a 37-mm gun; among

the "medium tanks": Pz-III with a 50-mm gun and Pz-IV. 3. The number of tanks in the mechanized corps of the Red Army is indicated as follows: total tanks in

the mechanized corps / including T-34 and KV. 4. The

number of the 1st MK is indicated without taking into account the 1st TD, which was before end of July 1941 in the Arctic.

5. The table does not take into account the 17th MK and the 20th MK of the Western Front, which were in the process of formation, and the 10th MK (Leningrad IN), operating on the front of the war with Finland.

6. In accordance with the actual course of hostilities, the 109th MD (5th MK) is included in the troops of the Southwestern Front, respectively, the number of tanks in the 5th MK is indicated without taking into account the strength of the 109th MD. 7. All figures

characterizing the composition and armament of the mechanized corps of the Red Army should be considered only as indicative. In different sources they differ by 10-15-20%. This, in particular, also applies to the number

of new types of tanks (KV and T-34), which continuously entered service with the units. So, for example, in the table above, there are no new types of tanks in the 21st MK, but in the combat documents of the first weeks of the war, KV tanks of the 21st mechanized corps are mentioned.

APPENDIX No. 3

Losses of tank groups of the Wehrmacht in the summer of 1941 on the Eastern Front

	1-я ТГр	2-я ТГр	3-я ТГр	4-я ТГр	Всего
Наличие на 22 июня 1941 г.	666	919	780	563	2928
Безвозвратные потери	171	235	233	121	760
Получено новых танков	20	25	42	2	89
Наличие боеготовых танков на 4—10 сентября	327	344	362	373	1406
Наличие временно неисправных танков	187	378	223	71	859

Примечание: не учтены наличие и потери танкеток Pz-I и командирских танков Pz.Bef

	Pz-II	Pz-35/38 (t)	Pz-III	Pz-IV	Всего
Наличие на 22 июня 1941 г.	743	780	966	439	2928
Безвозвратные потери	152	231	252	125	760
Получено новых танков	0	44	35	10	89
Наличие боеготовых танков на 4—10 сентября	458	393	362	193	1406
Наличие временно неисправных танков	146	193	387	133	859

Примечание: не учтены наличие и потери танкеток Pz-I и командирских танков Pz.Bef.

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